

THE ACTS OF THE
APOSTLES
E. S. YOUNG





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ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

THE TEACHING OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES

BY

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Life of Christ," or "Harmony of the Four Gospels,"
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the Books of the Bible."

"But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; and on his law
doth he meditate day and night."

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TO MY WIFE

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED
AFFECTIONATELY COMMEMORATING
THIRTY YEARS OF WEDDED LIFE

INTRODUCTION

The highest aim in Bible study is an understanding and appreciation of its message to the human heart, with the ultimate purpose of transforming that message into character and life. All study of facts and dates, of persons and places and events, is subordinate to this. It is of value to know what and when and where and by whom, only as this knowledge enables us to answer the larger question, Why? To what end?

But since an understanding of the historical background of a Bible passage is often indispensable to an appreciation of its religious teaching, it is necessary that due attention be given to this matter. Neglect of this has resulted in much fanciful interpretation of the Scriptures. The true goal of our study, however, must be kept constantly in view. The supreme question is: In what way will this contribute to my spiritual uplift?

Of all the books in this greatest Book in the world, the book of Acts is second only in importance to the Gospels, for it is the story of the Master's work which He performed after "he was received up," through the Holy Spirit operating in the lives of His Apostles. And that story is of the utmost interest to every Christian, for it is the story of the expansion of the church. It tells how, from the little company in the upper room at Jerusalem, the church came first to be numbered by the thousands, and then not to be numbered at all for multitude. It tells how, beginning at Jerusalem, the Gospel spread until it overran the Roman Empire.

To know this story well, to see its unfolding in its divinely guided sequence, to know the noble figures, the faith-filled men that move across its pages, to see the problems and obstacles they had to meet, and how they met them—to accomplish this is not only to acquaint oneself

with a most interesting history, to master a most valuable portion of Bible knowledge, but it is also to feast continually upon the Bread of Life Eternal. No part of the Sacred Volume is richer in soul nourishment, for while the particular questions and issues at stake in the apostolic church are, in many respects, different from ours, yet the principles involved in the solution of all these problems, theirs and ours, are the same. And sinful human nature and its needs are the same in our day as in that of Peter, John, and Paul.

It is the province of this book by Prof. Young to furnish the student the stimulus and help he needs in the accomplishment of the work we have described. The author is too well known to need any introduction to the Bible-studying public. He has given practically a lifetime to the promotion of Bible study. He has taught in colleges and Bible Institutes, has previously published several valuable books on Bible study, and has conducted Bible correspondence courses, until his name and work are widely known in the United States and Canada. This book is the fruitage of his long and successful experience as a Bible teacher.

The plan of the book is simple, easily comprehended, and well adapted to its purpose. It embraces an analysis of the Acts material carried out with considerable minuteness of detail, with copious and helpful comment on the text, and questions at the end of each division designed to test the student's knowledge and stimulate his interest. I am sure this book will prove to be a valuable aid to the mastery of one of the most important books of the Bible and one of the most important periods of Bible history. Whoever follows faithfully the plan as outlined, will surely find that he has made a large and useful addition to his store of Bible knowledge, and at the same time has greatly enriched his spiritual experience. I am glad to commend the book to the truth-loving Bible student, and count it a pleasure to introduce him to its pages.

Former President of McPherson
and Lordsburg Colleges.

EDWARD FRANTZ,
Editor Gospel Messenger.

PREFACE

The "Acts of the Apostles" contains the account of the last journey of Jesus with his disciples before his ascension, in which he more fully reveals to them the mission of the church. It is a book full of great achievements accomplished by men of great faith. My experience, after studying and teaching God's Book for more than twenty-five years, is that the church in this early period was every day hearing the Master's voice saying, "Go seek and save that which is lost." And because the church was obedient to that voice she became a daily soul-saving institution. Individuals and churches are not accomplishing in soul saving, in this day of education and civilization, what was accomplished in that early period, because God's Book is seriously neglected. The "Acts of the Apostles" is the best book that has ever been written for men and women to study, who are interested in the forward movement of the church and the salvation of the world. Peter and Paul were live wires in the early church, and by choosing them as your associates in the careful study of this book, you will become a live wire for the Master in the mission of soul saving as they were.

1. **Acts of the Apostles.** The title of this book is not the same in the different manuscripts. In one important manuscript the title is given "The Acts," which seems to be in keeping with the history contained in the book. It is a record of some of the Apostolic acts, but not a full account of the acts of the twelve Apostles. Thus the book contains, in the main, the acts of only a few Apostles. The labors of the twelve Apostles were soon obscured by Stephen, Philip and others, and a strong Gentile center established at Antioch. It is therefore not a full history of the twelve Apostles during said years, but the record of the important events

in the establishing of the Christian church. It is placed in the Bible just after the four Gospels, which are a record of the life and doings of Jesus while on earth; in this we have the life and doings of Jesus after his ascension. It is followed by the letters written by a number of representative men who lived in this great church period, who wrote from what they saw and believed was the true mission of the church.

2. Luke the Author. We are studying the history of a growing church. To give us such a history we need a man who is a growing man. He must not be influenced by local customs and traditions, but must be so great that he can, in a large measure, realize the needs of the whole world. He must be just as progressive as the church that belongs to Jesus. Luke wrote two very important books, worthy of the most careful study. Luke was not an eye-witness and minister of the Word from the beginning, but he says (Luke 1: 2-3), "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, O excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." In his introduction of The Acts he says (Acts 1: 1), "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, confirming all that Jesus began both to do and to teach." "The former treatise" here refers to his first book written to Theophilus. While Luke's name is not given as author in either of the books, yet by internal evidence and references made to it by Paul in his letters, there is no doubt that both books have the same author. There are at least fifty words and phrases used in the two books which are not found in any other books of the New Testament.

In the study of The Acts we are first introduced to the writer (16: 8) when Paul was at Troas on his second missionary journey. Here the writer begins to use (16: 10) the pronoun "we," showing that he accompanied Paul on his journey from Troas to Macedonia, and was with him in the

revival at Philippi. After Paul left Philippi, the historian (17: 1) again begins the use of "they" instead of "we," showing that he did not continue the journey with Paul, but remained with the church at Philippi. On the third missionary journey, when Paul returned from Corinth, and visited the church at Philippi (20: 5), the writer changes and uses "we," showing that he journeyed with Paul and was associated with him nearly all the time, during the remaining chapters of the book. The historian was for a considerable time a fellow-laborer with the Apostle, and by his own personal experience and association was thoroughly competent to give this inspired history of the early Christian church.

3. The Chronology of The Acts. This history begins with the Ascension A. D. 30 and closes with the imprisonment of Paul about A. D. 64. Luke the writer does not give us very many definite statements as to time in the early history of the book. There are a few events recorded which help us fix time, and from which we can give a somewhat accurate chronology as a working basis in the study of the entire book. The death of Herod Agrippa II. (Acts 12: 23) was about A. D. 44, and the dismissal of Felix as governor of Judea (Acts 24: 27) about A. D. 60. The death of Herod occurred about the time that Paul and Barnabas were sent by the Antioch church with contributions for the church at Jerusalem (Acts 11: 30). This was the first time Paul visited the Jerusalem church after taking up his work at Tarsus. However, before going to Jerusalem with the contribution he and Barnabas had spent a year at Antioch, and we know it was three years after his conversion that he made his first visit to Jerusalem. Thus we have four years of definite time, and if we include the time of his labors at Tarsus we would approximate the time of his conversion A. D. 36. Paul's third visit to Jerusalem took place fourteen years after his conversion (Gal. 2: 1). This would make the date for the Jerusalem council (15: 1-6) A. D. 50.

Felix was dismissed as governor A. D. 60. Paul had been a prisoner already two years at Cæsarea. His arrest at Jerusalem must have taken place (21: 33) A. D. 58. Dates are not inspired, yet we can secure better results by keeping in mind about the time in which certain events occurred and the events as to their location. The following dates are helpful in the study of this book: The ascension, A. D. 30; birth of the church, A. D. 30; stoning of Stephen, A. D. 36; the church in Jerusalem, six years; conversion of Saul A. D. 36; the church in Palestine, ten years; first missionary journey, 46 to 50; council at Jerusalem, A. D. 50; second missionary journey, 50 to 54; third missionary journey, 54 to 58; Paul's arrest A. D. 58; imprisonment at Cæsarea, 58 to 60; first two years' imprisonment at Rome, 60 to 62.

4. Divisions of the Book. In the study of this book one can not help realizing that the church is a growing institution. These stages of development must be carefully studied, in order to get a clear and proper understanding of the book as a whole.

During the first six years the church was confined to Jerusalem, and composed of Jewish people. The church in this period moved gradually forward undisturbed in the preaching of the Gospel and saving of souls for the first two or three years. Because of the increase of numbers and power given to this organized body, the Jewish Sanhedrim threatened the disciples with persecution if they would continue to teach in the name of Jesus. Persecution came and the Christians were scattered.

The next ten years the work of the church was principally done in Palestine. The scattered Christians went everywhere preaching the Gospel. Philip did missionary work in Samaria, baptized the eunuch, and continued his labors along the coast of the Mediterranean. The church in Jerusalem confirmed Philip's work at Samaria, and Peter made a missionary tour along the Mediterranean, which

resulted in adding many to the church at Lydda and Joppa, and the opening the door to the Gentiles and receiving many into Christian fellowship.

During the next eighteen years the church was doing aggressive missionary work, making converts and organizing churches in the different provinces in Asia Minor and in the countries of Europe. At the opening of this period the Holy Spirit directed the setting apart of Paul and Barnabas as leaders in this missionary movement.

5. **Jesus the Leader.** When Jesus was about to leave his disciples he said, "Lo, I am with you always." This promise of companionship was believed by the early disciples, and therefore equipped them for great things. Jesus said, "I came to seek and to save that which is lost." He now is with the Father, and directs his disciples in the finding of the lost. "Seek and save" is the mission of every follower of Jesus. He died to save men. He wants you to help people find Him. He is out of our sight, but sees and hears us. He gives orders; we obey his commands. The student in the study of these years of early church history must remember that it was Christ who led the way and not the Apostles. When an Apostle was to be appointed (1: 24) they prayed, "Lord, show whether of these two **thou** hast chosen." Jesus went before his disciples in suffering (Mark 10: 32), and they were amazed; and now He is going before them in triumph, and they are astonished. The disciples knew that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit as their Comforter (2: 33), and endowed them for service. The lame man was healed at the Beautiful Gate (3: 6) by the Lord manifesting his power. The Ethiopian was converted because Philip obeyed the voice of another (8: 26). Peter obeyed the voice of another at Joppa and opened salvation for the Gentiles, which was directly opposite to the church's teaching. Paul heard the Lord's voice on the way to Damascus, and by obedience became the Apostle to the Gentiles. While Paul was at Corinth the Lord told him to re-

main longer (18: 10), and gave this as his reason: "I have much people in this city."

Those who want to get the most from the study of The Acts must have Jesus Christ as a Companion, and listen to His voice in the directing of the work of His church. We behold Him acting from glory,—guiding, directing, visiting, sympathizing and encouraging his servants in carrying forward the greatest work on earth.

6. **The Holy Spirit.** The disciples can not do the work alone. They must have some one to teach them and give them strength to do things that seemed impossible to them. Jesus received the Holy Spirit at baptism, but his followers were baptized with water only during his ministry, and not anointed by Holy Spirit baptism until Christ had ascended. The Holy Spirit came and put His seal upon these believers and gave them new power, and the church became a saving institution. The Holy Spirit coming made the disciples able to take the doings and teachings of Jesus, while on earth, and present them in a proper way to those for whom Jesus died. The Christian must be able to make a surrender of all his powers, whether they be physical, intellectual or financial, in order to be used by the Holy Spirit. The Apostles were filled at Pentecost. As they went out every day into Christian service, in order to accomplish the mission of the Master, they needed to be refilled. When the seven were chosen they were full of the Holy Spirit. When Stephen preached he was stoned by the mob as a man filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was all the time teaching these followers of Jesus a broader Christian service. Every advance movement the church made was guided and witnessed by the Holy Spirit.

7. **Satan the Leader in Opposition.** We have just spoken about two supernatural persons in carrying forward the work of the Christian church. We are very soon introduced in The Acts to another supernatural person, who has been leading in the fight against God, ever since Adam and

Eve were placed into that beautiful home in the Garden. He contested every forward movement of righteousness during the entire period of Old Testament history. He was the great deceiver, causing many to be led astray. In this early church his first work was seen when the Sanhedrim arrested the two Apostles and demanded that they should no longer teach in the name of Jesus. He came into the church, and took possession of two dishonest church members; his deception was revealed and his agents put to death. The church gained her victory over him from without, and also from within. There will be great advantage to the student in the study of this book to realize fully the church's triumph. The defeat of any Christian or any church is always due to a lack of companionship and close fellowship with Jesus through prayer. Prayer is the Christian's weapon and the key that unlocks the best that God has. Will you let the Lord manifest His Power, so your life may be enriched as you start redeemed ones singing the glory song?

8. **Helps.** During the last thirty years we have had the privilege of associating with able Christian teachers from whom we have received many encouraging words helpful to us in the preparation of books on Bible study. We have also received much encouragement from the many students under our instruction while we taught in colleges, Bible Institutes, and gave individual instruction in Bible study in homes. We have a very large collection of valuable books on Bible study, written by men of ripe scholarship and large Christian experience. Space will permit us to mention but a few authors from whom we have received aid in the preparation of this volume who have written commentaries on the Acts: J. W. McGarvey, Morrison, Stifler, Lindsay, Myers, Lange, and Expositor's Bible. While we have received help and given credit in the writing of this book, yet we wish to call the students' attention to the fact that the book itself, The Acts, has had our first attention,

the above helps simply confirming the truths we discovered in The Acts, which are now set forth in this volume.

9. Why This Volume. During many years of Bible teaching it has been our experience that many ministers and Sunday-school teachers have read and studied the Bible without system. The Acts is one of the most important books in the Bible; if properly studied, it gives courage and inspiration in achieving great things for the Master. If your church needs a revival, study the revival book. This book is to be a companion to the "Life of Christ, or Harmony of the Four Gospels." The four books used in the study of our First Course by mail have been used in many homes. The demand made by our students, and encouragement received from those who know the value of these books in Bible study, made us feel under obligations to prepare these volumes that are now ready for our Advanced Course.

This book is to be taken up and studied by sections. Scripture texts have been explained, and test questions have been placed after each scripture. Give some time each day to the study of the Bible in your home. Study by yourself or join some Bible Class, that you may know the real value of Bible knowledge. Begin all your periods of Bible study with prayer. Be willing to grow and make changes in your life as the Holy Spirit teaches you the Word. Study to become better acquainted with Jesus, so as to be able to magnify him to others. The book contains the American Standard Revised text. The footnotes have been placed with the text in parenthesis. We have always insisted that Christian people should spend at least some time every day with God and His Word. If this book will help you to know Jesus better, make your religious life fuller of joy, and heaven your future home more attractive, then we shall feel that we have had some humble part in equipping you to do more efficient work for Him who has redeemed you.

CONTENTS

PART I.

THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM, 1: 1 to 8: 4, Six Years.

I. The Introduction, 1: 1-11,	19-24
1. Origin and Authority, 1: 1-2,	19
2. The Risen Savior, 1: 3-5,	21
3. The Promise of Power, 1: 6-8,	22
4. The Ascension and Message of Angels, 1: 9-11,	23
II. The Ten Day Meeting, 1: 12-26,	24-28
1. The Waiting Disciples, 1: 12-15,	24
2. The Fulfillment of Scripture, 1: 16-20,	26
3. The Apostle Chosen, 1: 21-26,	27
III. The Day of Pentecost, 2: 1-41,	28-39
1. Fulfillment of Christ's Promise, 2: 1-4,	28
2. The Effect on the Multitude, 2: 5-13,	30
3. Peter's Sermon, 2: 14-36,	32
4. Effect of Holy Spirit's Sermon, 2: 37-41,	38
IV. The First Persecution, 2: 42 to 4: 31,	40-61
1. The Primitive Church, 2: 42-47,	40
2. The Lame Man Healed, 3: 1-10,	45
3. Peter's Second Sermon, 3: 11-26,	49
4. Arrest and Imprisonment of Peter and John, 4: 1-4, ..	53
5. Trial Before the Sanhedrim, 4: 5-12,	54
6. Secret Session of Sanhedrim, 4: 13-17,	56
7. The Apostles' Triumph, 4: 18-22,	58
8. The Prayer Meeting, 4: 23-31,	59
V. Internal History and Second Persecution, 4: 32 to 5: 42, ..	61-72
1. The New Community, 4: 32-37,	61
2. Dishonest Church Members, 5: 1-11,	63
3. Sacredness of the Church, 5: 12-16,	65
4. Imprisonment and Proof of Apostles' Credentials, 5: 17-20,	66
5. Apostles on Trial, 5: 21-28,	67

- 6. Apostles Preach Gospel to Rulers, 5: 29-32, 69
- 7. Gamaliel's Address to the Court, 5: 33-39, 70
- 8. Scourging and Release of the Apostles, 5: 40-42, 71

VI. Internal History and Third Persecution, 6: 1 to 8: 4,73-89

- 1. Church Superior to Internal Difficulties, 6: 1-7, 73
- 2. Stephen's Activity and Arrest, 6: 8-15, 76
- 3. Stephen's Sermon, 7: 1-53, 78
- 4. Stephen the First Christian Martyr, 7: 54-8: 4, ..?..... 86

PART II.

THE CHURCH IN PALESTINE, 8: 5 to 12: 25, Ten Years. 91-139

I. Philip's Missionary Work, 8: 5-40,.....91-100

- 1. Philip's Success in Samaria, 8: 5-13, 91
- 2. Philip's Converts Receive the Holy Spirit, 8: 14-17, ... 93
- 3. The Wicked Proposal by Simon Magus, 8: 18-25, 94
- 4. Angel Directs and Guides Philip to Sinner, 8: 26-31, 97
- 5. Philip's Sermon to the Individual, 8: 32-36, 99
- 6. The Sinner Repents and Is Baptized, 8: 37-40,100

II. Conversion of Saul and First Missionary Work, 9: 1-30, 101-108

- 1. Conversion of Saul, 9: 1-9,101
- 2. Ananias Baptizes Saul, 9: 10-18,103
- 3. Saul Preaches Jesus in Damascus, 9: 19-22,104
- 4. Saul, the Preacher, Saved at Damascus, 9: 23-25,105
- 5. Saul Visits Church at Jerusalem, 9: 26-30,107

III. Preparation of Church for Admission of Gentiles, 9: 31 to 11: 18,109-125

- 1. Peace and Prosperity of Church, 9: 31,109
- 2. Peter's Miracle at Lydda, 9: 32-35,109
- 3. Peter's Miracle at Joppa, 9: 36-43,111
- 4. Cornelius' Vision, 10: 1-8,113
- 5. Peter's Vision, 10: 9-16,114
- 6. Peter's Journey to Cornelius, 10: 17-23,116
- 7. Peter and Cornelius Meet, 10: 24-33,117
- 8. Peter's Sermon, 10: 34-43,119
- 9. Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit, 10: 44-48,121
- 10. Broadening the Jerusalem Church, 11: 1-18,122

IV. Development of the New Religious Center, 11: 19-30, 125-130

- 1. The First Gentile Church in Antioch, 11: 19-21,125
- 2. Aid and Encouragement from Mother Church, 11:
22-24, 127
- 3. Barnabas Brings Saul to Antioch, 11: 25-26,129
- 4. Barnabas and Saul Sent to Jerusalem, 11: 27-30,130

V. Persecution Under Herod, 12: 1-25,131-139

1. James Beheaded and Peter Imprisoned, 12: 1-4,131
2. Peter Delivered From Prison, 12: 5-12,132
3. Peter Suddenly Appears at Prayer Meeting, 12: 13-17, 135
4. Death of Keepers and Herod, 12: 18-23,136
5. Saul and Barnabas Return to Antioch, 12: 24-25,138

PART III.

THE CHURCH OF THE GENTILES, 13: 1 to 28: 31, Eighteen Years.

I. Paul's First Missionary Journey, 13: 1 to 14: 28,141-164

1. The Great Missionary Church, 13: 1-3,141
2. Journey and Labor in Cyprus, 13: 4-12,143
3. Journey From Paphos to Antioch, 13: 13-15,147
4. Paul's First Recorded Sermon, 13: 16-41,148
5. The Effect of the Sermon, 13: 42-43,154
6. The Second Sabbath in Antioch, 13: 44-52,154
7. Journeys and Labors in Iconium, 14: 1-7,157
8. Preaching and Healing in Lystra, 14: 8-18,158
9. The Stoning of Paul, 14: 19-20,161
10. Missionaries Return Home, 14: 21-28,162

II. The Apostolic Council, 15: 1-35.164-175

1. Serious Difficulty in Antioch Church, 15: 1-5,164
2. Meeting of Apostles and Elders at Council, 15: 6-21, ..167
3. Decision and Letter of Council, 15: 22-29,172
4. Peace Restored in Antioch, 15: 30-35,174

III. Paul's Second Missionary Journey, 15: 36 to 18: 22, ..175-215

1. Separation of Paul and Barnabas, 15: 36-41,175
2. The Call of Timotheus, 16: 1-3,177
3. Revisiting the Galatian Churches, 16: 4-8,179
4. The Call to Macedonia, 16: 9-10,181
5. Journey to Europe and First Convert, 16: 11-15,183
6. First Miracle in Europe, 16: 16-18,184
7. Paul and Silas Scourged and Imprisoned, 16: 19-24, ...186
8. Prayer and Deliverance, 16: 25-29,187
9. Conversion of the Jailer, 16: 30-34,190
10. Public Release of Paul and Silas, 16: 35-40,191
11. Paul and Silas in Thessalonica, 17: 1-9,193
12. Founding of Church in Berea, 17: 10-14,197
13. Paul Brought to Athens, the First Work, 17: 15-21, ..198
14. Paul's Sermon to the Athenians, 17: 22-31,201
15. Effect of the Sermon, 17: 32-34,206
16. Paul's Ministry at Corinth, 18: 1-17,207
17. Return of Paul Through Ephesus and Jerusalem to
Antioch, 18: 18-22,214

IV. Paul's Third Missionary Journey, 18: 23 to 21: 17, ...216-251

1. Second Visit to Galatia and Phrygia, 18: 23,216
2. Apollos at Ephesus and Achaia, 18: 24-28,216
3. The New Pentecost at Ephesus, 19: 1-7,219
4. Paul Preaching at Ephesus, 19: 8-12,222
5. Suppression of Witchcraft, 19: 13-20,225
6. Paul's Great Plans for the Future, 19: 21-22,227
7. Riot of the Silversmiths, 19: 23-41,229
8. Paul's Second Visit to Europe, 20: 1-6,233
9. Church Services in Troas, 20: 7-12,238
10. Journey to Miletus, 20: 13-16,240
11. Paul's Farewell Address to Ephesian Elders, 20: 17-38, 242
12. Journey from Miletus to Tyre, 21: 1-6,246
13. Journey From Tyre to Cæsarea, 21: 7-14,248
14. Journey from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, 21: 15-17,250

V. Paul's Rejection and Imprisonment, 21: 18 to 26: 32, ..251-292

1. Paul's Advice from the Bishop, 21: 18-26,251
2. Paul Beaten by the Mob and Arrested, 21: 27-36,253
3. Paul's Privilege to Address the Mob, 21: 37-40,256
4. Paul's Defense Before the Mob, 22: 1-21,257
5. The Effect of Paul's Address, 22: 22-29,261
6. Paul Before the Sanhedrim, 22: 30-23: 10,263
7. Paul's Vision and Removal to Cæsarea, 23: 11-35,266
8. Paul's Trial Before Felix, and Imprisonment, 24: 1-27, 271
9. Paul Before Festus and Agrippa, 25: 1-27,279
10. Address Before the Royal Court, 26: 1-29,286
11. Paul Declared Innocent, 26: 30-32,292

VI. The Gospel on the Way to Rome, 27: 1 to 28: 16,293-312

1. Journey from Cæsarea to Crete, 27: 1-12,293
2. The Ship Leaves Fair Havens for Phenice, 27: 13-20, ..298
3. Paul Gives Comfort and Advice, 27: 21-26,300
4. The Ship's Company in Great Danger, 27: 27-38,301
5. The Ship Is Lost, But the Men Are Saved, 27: 39-44, .303
6. Paul on the Island of Malta, 28: 1-9,306
7. The Journey from Melita to Rome, 28: 10-16,309

VII. Paul's Ministry in Rome, 28: 17-31,313-320

1. Paul's First Interview with the Jews, 28: 17-22,313
2. Paul Preaching to the Jews, 28: 23-27,315
3. Paul Turning to the Gentiles, 28: 28-31,316

The Acts of the Apostles

PART I

THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM.

Acts 1: 1 to 8: 4.

From the Ascension of Christ, A. D. 30, to the Death
of Stephen, A. D. 36.

Section I. The Introduction. Acts 1: 1-11.

1. ORIGIN AND AUTHORITY.

Acts 1: 1, 2.

(1) The former (Gr. first) treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, (2) until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen.

The "former treatise" refers to the Gospel written by Luke, and gives the history of Jesus' career on earth. This is the second book that Luke wrote, and in it he shows a further activity of Jesus from a point at which the Gospel leaves it. Thus, in studying this book from the first chapter to the last, we have the words and works of Jesus continued through the Holy Spirit. The "former treatise" was the words and works of Jesus while on earth, and this treatise gives the words and works of Jesus after His ascension, through the disciples, by the Holy Spirit. That both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of the Acts are addressed to Theophilus (Friend of God, Love of God, as His

name signifies), does not mean that they were meant for him alone. He is a prominent character at the time of writing the two books, and as his name indicates close communion with God, the book is written for all who are in communion with God, through the acceptance of Jesus as their best Friend.

“Until the day in which He was taken up.” Jesus had placed a limit to the teaching of the Apostles, as shown from the presentation (Matt. 16:20; 17:9). He did this because the disciples were yet incapable of setting forth His claims as the Messiah, correctly. It was on the night of His betrayal that he promised them a Comforter, who would come and bring to their remembrance all His teaching. Thus, the restrictions placed upon them would be removed. The Commandments refer to His commission given to His disciples during His resurrection period.

When He was with the eleven disciples in Galilee, speaking about His authority and power in heaven and on earth, He said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28: 19-20). Then, on the day in which He was taken up, He gave His final words in the commission to His disciples: “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24: 46-47). “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned” (Mark 16: 15-16). These are the orders of the King. The disciples received them. Luke writes the history of the church as she carries forward the commission of Jesus during the first thirty-four years.

QUESTIONS.

To whom was this book addressed?

Give meaning of Theophilus.

What two books did Luke write?

What was the purpose of each book?

To whom, and through whom, were commandments given?

2. THE RISEN SAVIOR.

Acts 1:3-5.

(3) To whom he also showed (Gr. presented) himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God: (4) and, being assembled together with them (or, eating with them), he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: (5) for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in (or, with) the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

In the Gospels, the number of proofs given of the resurrection of Jesus are recorded, and are not repeated here. We have, however, a fact not related before; viz.: that the time from the Resurrection to the Ascension was forty days. During this time Jesus walked with His disciples, talked with them, ate with them, prepared food for them to eat, gave them the privilege to touch His body—presented Himself a living Savior—and showed Himself to be so by many proofs which are beyond controversy.

During this time, His main line of teaching was for the salvation of the human race. In order to equip the disciples for this greatest mission in the world, He asked them to wait for the promise of the Father. He instructed them where to wait, how to wait, and what to wait for. This commandment is not the same as in 1:2. By obedience to this commandment, they will become equipped with power for the work of the commission.

Jesus says "Go teach." Do you? "Make disciples." Do you? Can you expect to receive blessings from Him if you fail to equip yourself to teach His Word?

QUESTIONS.

Give time from Resurrection to Ascension.

Give time from Resurrection to Pentecost.

Where, when, and by whom was He seen alive?

What was His subject of conversation? 3.

What was the promise of the Father?

Why the reference to John's baptism?

3. THE PROMISE OF POWER.

Acts 1: 6-8.

(6) They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? (7) And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within (or, appointed by) his own authority. (8) But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Before His departure the disciples asked Jesus a very important question about the Kingdom. This question, no doubt, was prompted by the knowledge they had obtained by the study of the Old Testament. Only those who have knowledge of God's purposes and revelations, as set forth in the Old Testament, can understand the purpose of the question asked by the disciples and the reply made to them by Jesus. The Lord does not rebuke the disciples for asking this question. The times and seasons for this restoration were not then revealed, but the Father purposed to keep the same power in His own hands. They are told what to do when the power comes upon them. They are to be witnesses of Jesus. They are to begin in Jerusalem. They begin at home. The four steps in this verse are Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth.

This is the last interview the disciples had with Jesus before His ascension.

QUESTIONS.

What question did they ask Jesus? 6.

When did they come together? 6, cf. Luke 24: 50.

What was Jesus' answer to the disciples?

What power were they to receive?

Quote the missionary text of the Bible. 8.

What part of the text has been obeyed?

Give qualifications of a good witness.

Name places where witnesses are needed.

4. THE ASCENSION AND MESSAGE OF THE ANGELS.

Acts 1: 9-11.

(9) And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. (10) And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; (11) who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.

Jesus had just completed His last interview with the disciples. His hands were uplifted, and He was in the act of blessing them when He was taken up. Gradually He must have been lifted out of their sight. He who so often had spoken to them, who had been their constant encouragement and Companion, He who had died on the Cross, and was raised from the dead by the power of God; He who had been with the disciples in His glorified human body, is now taken up and a cloud carried Him from their sight. It was, no doubt, the same Glory Cloud in which He appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration. It came to take Him back to His Father's house, after an absence of about thirty-three years. What a glorious meeting that must have been in the return of an obedient Son to a faithful Father! He is with the Father at His right hand, He is our Advocate, our High Priest, and through Him we present our claim to the Father.

The cloud had received Him, but the disciples continued to look. It is not wrong to look, and the upward look should always be encouraged; but there is a time to look and a time to work. The angels, robed in white, appeared on the scene, and brought the disciples good news. The good news was the promise of His return. "This Jesus, who was received up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into Heaven." They stated not merely that Jesus shall come again, but He shall come "in like manner"; in the same way that the Apostles had seen Him go—visible and glorious. This was inspiring news to the disciples, and produced wonderful results in the saving of souls. The church now should be inspired by the same promise given by the angels, "that Jesus will return in like manner."

QUESTIONS.

Give full description of Jesus' parting from the disciples.

Who was present at the Ascension?

Give meaning of the message of the angels, and what was the message?

What was the teaching in the early church concerning Christ's second coming?

What is the belief of the Christian church now concerning the second coming of Christ?

Section II. The Ten-Day Meeting. Acts 1: 12-26.

1. THE WAITING DISCIPLES.

Acts 1: 12-15.

(12) Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off. (13) And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding; both Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son (or, brother) of James. (14) These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer, with the women (or, with certain women), and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

(15) And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, and said [and there was a multitude of persons (Gr. names) gathered together, about a hundred and twenty].

The disciples received the rebuke, believed the message of the angels, and departed to Jerusalem to wait for the promise of the Father. Their sorrow in parting from the Lord was turned to joy, because they believed they would meet Him again. The disciples were now in the upper room, and we are informed, in Luke's Gospel (24: 53), that at times during this period of ten days they were also in the temple, praising and blessing God.

The right kind of waiting will always bring the right kind of results. Those who continue with one accord in prayer and supplication find that the book most helpful and inspiring is God's Book. Men and women must daily hear God's voice speaking to them through His Word, to prepare them for prayers and supplications that reach the Throne of God, and by so doing receive His blessing.

A catalogue of the disciples' names is once more given, and the names of a few other persons, in order that we may know who had the honor and the privilege of being present at the giving of the Spirit. Jesus' own brethren are mentioned, who at one time opposed His work. Their presence showed that they had changed their attitude and were now among the believers. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was present with other women. This is the last time her name appears in the New Testament. She, with the rest of the women, was with the disciples, waiting for the promise of the Father. So, when the Holy Spirit was given, she too was baptized by the "One Spirit" into the "One Body." The disciples believed that, at the close of the ten days, the Holy Spirit would come and personally manifest His presence. No matter what the training may be, the disciples now should have stated times for Bible study, prayer and supplication for a baptism of the Holy Spirit. We do not pray as they did before Pentecost for the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but we pray that He may equip us for soul-saving.

QUESTIONS.

How far from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem? 12.

Where did the disciples go?

Give the names of the Apostles. 13.

Name the women, and tell who they were. 14, cf. Luke 23: 49-55.

What was the real purpose of this meeting?

Give number that attended this meeting.

2. FULFILLMENT OF SCRIPTURE.

Acts 1: 16-20.

(16) Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. (17) For he was numbered among us, and received his portion (or, lot) in this ministry. (18) (Now this man obtained a field with the reward of his iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. (19) And it became known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch that in their language that field was called Akeldama, that is, The field of blood.) (20) For it is written in the book of Psalms, (Psa. 69: 25) Let his habitation be made desolate, And let no man dwell therein: and, (Psa. 109: 8) His office (Gr. overseership) let another take.

The number of the disciples present at this time was one hundred and twenty. Sometime during the ten days the Apostle Peter presented to the believers an account of the fate of Judas. Matthew gives an account of the sad fate of Judas. Luke gives us some additional information not given by Matthew. A careful study will show that there is no discrepancy between the two accounts. Matthew says Judas hanged himself. Luke says he fell headlong and burst asunder. If he hanged himself he was either taken down, or he fell, and Luke says he fell. The Psalmist makes prophetic utterance concerning the destiny of the unfaithful one, and God never forgets to fulfill any prophetic utterances made under His direction.

QUESTIONS.

Who guided David in giving his message to the people?
Who was guide to them that took Jesus? 16, cf. Luke 22:47.
Who foretold of this sin and when? Psa. 41:9.
Was the field bought before or after the death of Judas?
Why called "the field of blood"?

3. THE APOSTLE CHOSEN.

Acts 1:21-26.

(21) Of the men therefore that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, (22) beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection. (23) And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. (24) And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one whom thou hast chosen, (25) to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place. (26) And they gave lots for them; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Peter suggests to the disciples the selection of a man to fill the place of Judas. The person eligible must have the following qualifications: He must have been a witness of all that Christ said and did in His earthly ministry, and especially that of His resurrection. Only two can be found with said qualifications, Barsabbas and Matthias. One is to be selected to fill the place. A decision must be made. They have a prayer meeting. They ask for just one definite thing, "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one whom Thou hast chosen." They want to know Jesus' choice (not their own), and Matthias is chosen. Thus it was not Peter or the unorganized church that gave Matthias his place as an Apostle, but the Lord. The vacancy has been filled, and we have twelve Apostles, who are represented to sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. All is in readiness now for the great day, which is described in the next chapter.

QUESTIONS.

- Why was it necessary to fill the vacancy?
What qualifications were prescribed, and why? 21, 22.
Who really chose the Apostle?
Name the Apostles with the one just appointed.
Why was the choice of the Apostles limited to two?

Section III. The Day of Pentecost. Acts 2: 1-41.**1. FULFILLMENT OF CHRIST'S PROMISE.****Acts 2: 1-4.**

(1) And when the day of Pentecost was now come (Gr. was being fulfilled), they were all together in one place. (2) And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. (3) And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder (or, parting among them; or, distributing themselves), like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The great day was at hand, the advent of the Holy Spirit. It took many long years of preparation until the first Messianic prophecy, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," was fulfilled, and Christ's first coming into the world was made possible. The promise was given, the preparation made, and the second advent was made possible—the coming of the Holy Spirit. They were without strength and without guidance. They had often been to their limit, but now they go beyond the possible into the impossible.

This event occurred the fiftieth day after the Sabbath of the passover week, Pentecost meaning fiftieth. In the Old Testament it is known as the Feast of Weeks, Feast of Harvest, also called the Day of First-fruits. At the time of the Passover, a sheaf was brought from the harvest, and offered before the Lord, and fifty days later, at the time of Pentecost, two loaves were offered before the Lord. There was a marked difference between these two offerings. At the Pass-

over, the sheaf was offered just as it grew. It was offered without a sin offering. This sheaf represented Jesus. The sheaf cut off was presented for the sins of the world. It was without leaven, for He Himself was the Sin Offering, and was typically offered to God at every Passover. The hundred and twenty were not so. They were like the two loaves. The two loaves were offered with leaven and with a sin offering. If these wave loaves needed a sin offering every year at Pentecost to make them acceptable unto God, then this company that was waiting in the upper room are like the two loaves, and their Sin Offering is Jesus, who makes them acceptable to God.

When the priests, including the High Priests, were washed for service and consecration, the High Priest was anointed immediately by the Holy Spirit as he entered upon his ministry. The common priests were washed, but anointed later. This anointing, in the Old Testament, is typical of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The disciples had been washed, and this is the day of their anointing. They are now kings and priests, taking orders from the King on the Throne, looking to the Holy Spirit as their Leader, for strength and power to carry these orders into execution.

The three great feasts, where all the male members were to be present, were the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacle. We are told that in the time of Nero more than two and one-half million Jews gathered in Jerusalem from all parts of the world, to attend the Passover, and this feast being in the summer, would give an opportunity for greater numbers from all parts of the world to be present in Jerusalem than at any other season.

After the exile, special services were held to remember the giving of the Law, which was fifty days after they came out of Egypt. The Jews still observe this day, and read publicly in the Synagogue that portion of Exodus which describes the giving of the Law, the first chapter of the Prophet Ezekiel, and the third chapter of Habakkuk. This may

have been the reading at the very time when the room was being Spirit-filled, where the disciples were gathered. It was Sunday; it was the fiftieth day from the Passover Sabbath; it was early in the morning, before nine o'clock.

They were all present; they were united; and the outward manifestations of the Spirit were: (1) the sound of a mighty wind, the house being filled by His presence, the life-giving power of the Spirit; (2) cloven tongues as of fire, each of the hundred and twenty being crowned with one. Fire here may have reference to the Spirit's purifying and energy; (3) speaking in foreign tongues. This was the wonderful way in which God now spoke in the Holy Spirit. Thus we have the three signs: mighty winds, tongues of fire, speaking in tongues, as the Holy Spirit's manifestation.

QUESTIONS.

- What was this feast called?
- What other names were given to this feast?
- Name the three Jewish feasts.
- What did the offering of the sheaf typify?
- What was always offered with the two loaves, and why?
- Why was Jesus anointed at the time of His baptism?
- Name the three external manifestations.
- Why call it a baptism?

2. THE EFFECT ON THE MULTITUDE.

Acts 2: 5-13.

(5) Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. (6) And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. (7) And they were all amazed and marveled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galilæans? (8) And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born? (9) Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, (10) in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, (11) Cretans and Arabians, we hear them



THE DAY OF PENTECOST

speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God. (12) And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? (13) But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.

All the believers were given the cloven tongue, and spoke with the new tongue. The Holy Spirit, who brought this new tongue for each individual, made it possible for them to speak so that all the people could understand them. This talking in various languages drew attention of the passing crowd. The people were confounded and overwhelmed by surprise. They knew the people that were speaking were Galileans, and were aware that they had not learned to speak in the different languages of the people then present. Many in this congregation recognized at once that these people were under the influence of the heavenly power. Then there were some who mocked and, because they were not able to understand what was being said, attributed it to the influence of new wine. The tongue given and operated by the Holy Spirit sings praises to God, speaks for the higher development of man, and constantly magnifies the life of Christ to lost souls.

QUESTIONS.

Why were so many people in Jerusalem at this time?

What brought the people to the disciples?

What astonished the hearers?

How many countries were represented? 9-11.

Why this "symbol of the tongues"?

It represents the means by which the Gospel is to be spread. First revival opened men's mouths and set men talking.

What did the mockers say?

3. PETER'S SERMON.—Acts 2: 14-36.

(1) Introduction.—Acts 2: 14-21.

a. His Defense.—Acts 2: 14-15.

(14) But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, saying, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto

my words. (15) For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

Peter is a changed man since the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He is standing with the eleven and begins the delivery of his sermon with a strong voice, so as to be heard by the people. He first makes his defense against the mockers, because they could not understand the language of the Holy Spirit spoken by the disciples, and concluded that their speaking was but drunken nonsense. Peter says it is but nine o'clock in the morning, and for this reason it would be next to impossible that the charge could be true. On Pentecost and other feast days, Jews would abstain from wine and food before that hour. Thus the early hour made it highly improbable that these church workers could be under the influence of wine.

QUESTIONS.

What effect had Christ's resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit on Peter?

What was the position of Peter when he spoke?

What was the significance of the third hour to the church?

Why could the mockers not understand the Apostles when they spoke by the power of the Holy Spirit?

b. His Explanation.—Acts 2: 16-21.

(16) But this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel:

(17) (Joel 2: 28 ff) And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

(18) Yea and on my servants (Gr. bondmen) and on my hand-maidens (Gr. bondmaidens) in those days will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

(19) And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:

(20) The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord come, that great and notable day:

(21) And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The people had asked, "What meaneth this?" The Holy Spirit directs Peter to one of the Old Testament prophecies, found in the Book of Joel. Peter quotes these words from the Book of Joel. He does not mean to infer that these prophecies were all fulfilled on that day. He directs their attention to these prophecies to indicate that great surprises will be sprung upon the people, just like the one through which they are passing, when all these prophetic utterances will be fulfilled.

QUESTIONS.

What is the sure light to the Christian's path?

In what relation do the Word and Spirit stand to each other?

What Scripture did the Holy Spirit bring to Peter's remembrance?

When Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he was directed to the Bible for the true explanation.

(2) The Works of Jesus.—Acts 2: 22-23.

(22) Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works (Gr. powers) and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; (23) him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men (or, men without the law; see Rom. 2: 12) did crucify and slay.

Peter puts before his congregation the third part of his address, the whole story of the Messiah, whom they had rejected. He calls special attention to His work. He uses the name "Jesus of Nazareth," the name they were most familiar with, the name too that was written above His cross. It is the Holy Spirit's purpose to picture before them the humiliation and rejection of Jesus Christ and His resurrection by the use of the name "Jesus of Nazareth." Their attention is called to His preaching and miracles during the three years' ministry. The death of Christ was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. The sufferings of Christ had been revealed in different places in the Old Testament. All these things had come to pass according to

the foreknowledge of God. Jesus says, "Ye have taken." They were the guilty instruments. Jesus was crucified and slain because they had delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles who put Him to death.

QUESTIONS.

What people were present to hear this sermon?

Were any of these people present when Jesus was crucified?

How long before this was He crucified?

Name some miracles and wonders referred to here.

State the facts expressed here.

(a) That Jesus was approved of God by miracles; (b) it was in keeping with the foreknowledge of God; (c) they knew this to be so; (d) He was crucified by wicked hands.

(3) The Resurrection of Jesus.—Acts 2:24-32.

a. Statement of Fact.—Acts 2:24.

(24) Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

They showed to the Jews that they had really rejected Christ, and had Him crucified, and buried, and the tomb sealed and guarded, yet when God's power was manifested He was brought forth into life, and is at this moment the Messiah, our Redeemer.

QUESTIONS.

Who raised up Jesus?

Give meaning of "loosed the pangs of death."

Why could death not hold Him?

Jesus passed through death and made it the gateway to glory for His followers.

b. The Prediction by David.—Acts 2:25-31.

(25) For David saith concerning him, (Psa. 16:8 ff) I beheld the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

(26) Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh also shall dwell (or, tabernacle) in hope:

(27) Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.

(28) Thou madest known unto me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance (or, in thy presence).

(29) Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. (30) Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one (or, one should sit) upon his throne; (31) he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

After stating the fact that Christ is now raised from the dead, the Holy Spirit, through Peter, calls their attention to the same teaching in the Psalm, and in the teaching in which they themselves have great confidence. The Spirit who spoke to David had Christ in view (Psa. 16). "My flesh shall rest in hope," cannot refer to David because David died and was buried. Therefore, it must refer to Christ. He also calls their attention to Psa. 110. This same Psalm Jesus had used to silence His enemies (Matt. 22:41-46). Jesus' answer to these enemies brings out four very important points in this Psalm: (1) that David is the author of the Psalm; (2) that he was given it under the direction of the Spirit; (3) that the Psalm speaks of the Messiah; (4) that it was someone who was superior to David. We are informed here by the Holy Spirit that Christ would ascend into Heaven, and sit on David's throne after the resurrection.

QUESTIONS.

Why address them as men and brethren? 29.

Did David know that the Messiah should descend from him?

Whose flesh did not see corruption? 31, cf. Psa. 110: 1.

Give the meaning of the quotation made by Peter.

c. The Witnesses of the Resurrection.—Acts 2:32.

(32) This Jesus did God raise up, whereof (or, of whom) we all are witnesses.

“This Jesus,” the very One they had crucified, and whose miracles and teachings they thought they had destroyed, God has raised up. We are here to testify that He is a living Savior, and believe Him to be, by His authority and power, able to put all enemies under His feet. We have heard Him teach, we have seen Him work miracles. We saw Him crucified; we saw Him after God raised Him. He gave us His commission. We saw Him ascend behind the clouds. The Holy Spirit brings us the news that He is now at the right hand of the Father.

QUESTIONS.

Compare this statement with 2:24.

How many of the disciples were witnesses of His being alive?

Do we know that Jesus lives, and are we witnesses?

How can you tell a witness for Jesus from a witness for something else?

(4) The Manifestations of the Holy Spirit.—Acts 2:33-36.

(33) Being therefore by (or, at) the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. (34) For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, (Psa. 110: 1) The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

(35) Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

(36) Let all the house (or, every house) of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.

Peter is not satisfied to point these people to the work accomplished by Christ's ministry, and to the fact that God raised Him from the dead, but assures them that the very manifestation of the Spirit's presence, in fulfillment of the Father's promise, bears witness to an exaltation not seen by human eyes. Since the Holy Spirit has come, we know that Jesus Christ is on the Father's throne. This was testimony that no man could question. Peter again takes these Jews back to the Old Testament, and refers them to Psa. 110, and really convinces them that David could refer to none else but Christ, who is now on the throne.

QUESTIONS.

What had been the promise of the Father?
When did Jesus promise to send the Comforter?
What did they see, and what did they hear? 33.
Give value of quotation from David. 34-35.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was an evidence that Jesus was exalted and alive at the right hand of the Father.

The theme that Peter had in his mind from the first, Jesus the Messiah, was not announced until the conclusion of the address, verse 36. This, no doubt, seemed most fitting to the Holy Spirit, who was directing Peter in the preaching of this sermon, because the theme was distasteful to many. The arguments for this theme which he had in his mind are three-fold, as shown in (1) The works of Jesus, (2) The Resurrection of Jesus, (a) by the testimony of Scripture, and (b) by their own testimony, (3) The Manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

4. THE EFFECT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S SERMON.

Acts 2: 37-41.

(37) Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? (38) And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (39) For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. (40) And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. (41) They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.

The results of the sermon speak for themselves, and clearly testify to the presence of the Messiah. The vast concourse of people is brought into an agony of conviction, and three thousand cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" This sermon was not pleasing to them because it was intellectual, or philosophical, or oratorical, but because it was spoken by men who were on fire with a message for soul saving, and the message went into their hearts. This is the first revival sermon on record.

Every revivalist should carefully study this sermon, fill his heart with biblical facts, deliver them with the tongue set on fire by the Holy Spirit, and the message cannot help piercing the hearts of men and women. The cry was answered by Peter immediately. Repent, change your mind and conduct, confess your guilt, love Jesus and be obedient to His teaching. "Be baptized." This Jesus had told Peter would be the result of teaching, and was the second step in the commission, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." By doing this, the one that repented confessed publicly his willingness to accept Jesus Christ as his Savior. Upon baptism, two conditions are met: (1) the forgiveness of sins, (2) the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise was not limited to the Jews, who were then present, but included their offspring, and those "afar off," the Gentiles—an offer of salvation for all. The door of mercy is open. Every possible effort was made to rescue these sinners from the self-righteousness that would drag them to perdition. They were going away from God and the right.

QUESTIONS.

- What pricked them in the heart? 37, cf. 36.
- When convicted of sin, what did they say?
- What did Peter tell them to do?
- Meaning of the word "repent"?
- Give design of baptism.
- In whose name or authority were they to be baptized?
- On what condition was the Holy Spirit promised?
- What was wrong with the generation referred to in verse 40?
- What class of persons were baptized? 41.
- In what way did these converts make a public confession?
- What preparation was made by the church for this revival?
- What good results come to a church by a revival, besides that of saving souls?

Section IV. The First Persecution.

Acts 2: 42-4: 31.

1. THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.—Acts 2: 42-47.

(1) The Fourfold Training.—Acts 2: 42.

(42) And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship (or, in fellowship), in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

A. Instruction.

This chapter gives the method of salvation presented to the Apostles by Jesus in the commission. The disciples, on receiving the Holy Spirit, had taught all the nations then present at Jerusalem, showing to them that Christ died, arose again, and was at the right hand of the Father. The people were convicted of sin, and cried out, "What must we do?" Peter at once gave the instruction he had from Jesus, "Repent, and be baptized." Being obedient to this part of the commission, they received forgiveness of sin. They are now members of the church. They are called-out ones. *This is a new community, every member sealed by the Holy Spirit.* Again, remembering the instruction of Jesus in the commission, he takes up the last work, the teaching of the new converts. Teaching put first, shows its great importance. It is not a matter of indifference. It is in obedience to the command. These early disciples were to learn all about the teachings and miracles of Jesus and the practical beauties of religion. If the churches would obey the commands given by Jesus, as the early disciples did, then every member added to the church would at once be instructed, and by so doing grow into Christian life and become a power in soul saving.

QUESTIONS.

Who was the Instructor of every Christian in the early church?

What did Jesus tell the Apostles to do after converts were baptized?

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Thus the church that fails in giving instruction to young converts, immediately after uniting with the church, of all that Jesus began to do and teach, as presented in the four Gospels, hinders the increase in spiritual power in soul saving and is disobedient to the voice of Jesus. Why are Christians indifferent to the study of the Bible?

B. Fellowship.

They are a great family. They are together for mutual encouragement. This new community, with this new zeal, cheerfully accepted the new ordinances, though they continued at first in fellowship with Judaism, prayers, and temple worship, but they were baptized, and all accepted the higher teaching as presented by their Leader, Jesus Christ. Is it not wonderful, as they come into this new life and spiritual power, that they are able to break off, away from the external hindrances that kept others from enjoying this holy fellowship? Men and women, having this holy stamp, the seal of the Holy Spirit, are given power to shake off everything that interferes with the progress of this new society, and enjoy fellowship made sweet and abiding by the constant presence and holy influence of the Holy Spirit.

Where there is fellowship there is spiritual growth and power. Everyone in this church must be big enough to be a blessing to every other one.

QUESTIONS.

What is meant by the term “fellowship” (1 Cor. 10:17; Rom. 15:27)?

It means joint participation in spiritual things, Christian sympathy, experience and practical charity. No one can be as good a Christian alone as he can by being in fellowship with other Christians.

Why should Christians meet together?

What are some of the greatest hindrances to spiritual growth?

C. Breaking of Bread.

On the night of His betrayal, in the presence of His disciples, Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” The Holy Spirit, present in this body of believers, calls the

attention of the disciples to the broken bread, which foretold His broken body, and the cup, which was the emblem of the precious blood that He shed. There is no command given to instruct us how often the breaking of bread and the giving of the cup was to be observed.

It was the Holy Spirit's mission to bring to the remembrance of His disciples the teaching of Jesus. This request the Lord had made when He had broken the bread and filled the cup with wine, foretelling the giving of Himself in His death and suffering which these emblems were to show forth. Now the Holy Spirit had opened their understanding, they obeyed Jesus' command in partaking of it. In doing so, they were growing in the spirit and likeness of Jesus, and showing forth Christ's death here on earth until He shall return, as promised by the angel when He ascended.

QUESTIONS.

What was the purpose in the breaking of the bread?

How often is this command to be obeyed?

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye do proclaim the Lord's death till He come."

When were the Apostles instructed by Jesus to observe this service?

How long is this service to be continued?

D. Prayer Meeting.

The Apostles, who associated with Jesus while He was in the body, found Him often in communion with His Father in prayer. He went out early in the morning and the disciples found Him in prayer. He climbed the mountains and alone with His Father engaged in prayer. All His great work was preceded by a conference alone with His Father. The disciples learned this same secret; they were taught to pray in secret as well as in public. The disciples came to Jesus and asked to have instructions in prayer. The early church has caught the secret. He who has organized the church, He who is the Builder of the church, while on earth never forgot that the result of His mission

depended on keeping in close touch by prayer with the Father.

Jesus, at the right hand of the Father, the church now on earth commissioned to carry forth the work of the absent Son, is here in the very beginning in communion with the Son, asking for direction, and power, that His church may grow in numbers, in holiness, and clothed in His own righteousness. The church, the individual that does not have stated times for communion with Jesus through prayer, can not help but be weak and fail to accomplish what was accomplished in the early church by spending much time in communion with the Lord upon the throne.

QUESTIONS.

What can you say about Jesus' habit of prayer?

Why were the disciples so anxious to know of Jesus how to pray?

When a Christian is in trouble to whom does he go for relief?

What is the best text book on prayer?

It is the Bible. When you open your Bible you hear God talk to you, and the more you let God talk to you and thus become better acquainted with Him, the better you will be able to talk to Him in prayer and know what to talk to Him about.

(2) The Ideal Community.—Acts 2: 43-47.

(43) And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. (44) And all that believed were together, and had all things common; (45) and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. (46) And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, (47) praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them (Gr. together) day by day those that were saved (or, were being saved).

"Fear fell upon every soul." The church engaged in her great religious duties, placed upon her by her Master, as shown in 42 and 43, and manifestation of results in 47, shows the threefold influence this church had upon unbe-

lievers. The unbelievers, under said influence, were brought under deep conviction. The great crowd that had assembled could not help approving the wonderful work wrought by this new community. Many of those who heard the preaching and saw the miracles confessed Jesus Christ as their Savior, and every day they were added to the Lord and the church grew in numbers.

“Were together and had all things common.” In this real church, under the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with the display of the power, everything owned by each individual had on it the same seal that was upon himself, the Holy Spirit. The property that was theirs was not their own because they themselves were bought with a price, and the price that was paid included everything that belonged to the person who was bought. They were so filled with this brotherly love that the wealthier brethren sold their property, in order to give money to those who needed it. And a church thus influenced would make the poor just as honest in not taking any more than was needed, as the rich, in not pretending to give more than was really given. The rich and poor, each had as much as they needed.

The early church members had but one mission, and that was Christ’s commission. That was their business. Everything else was subordinate. Such a church has time for religious training, religious duties, even more than fifty-two Sundays in the year. Weeks during the year will be given to the work of Christ, and churches will see what the New Testament church saw—sinners saved each day in the year. If sinners are to be saved each day in the year, why do churches have revival efforts limited to about two or three weeks in a year?

At this time there were no creeds or denominations, and when a soul was saved it was added to the Lord. This may be the reason that so many so-called “converts” have no spiritual power, because they have been numbered as being added to some creed or denomination instead of being added

to the Lord. A soul added to the Lord is given life and power to do things.

QUESTIONS.

What brought such great fear on the unbelievers?

How did the early church members express their brotherly love?

What was the business of the early church?

Does the church now have the same business?

To whom were the converts added in the early church?

How often did they have a revival during the year and when?

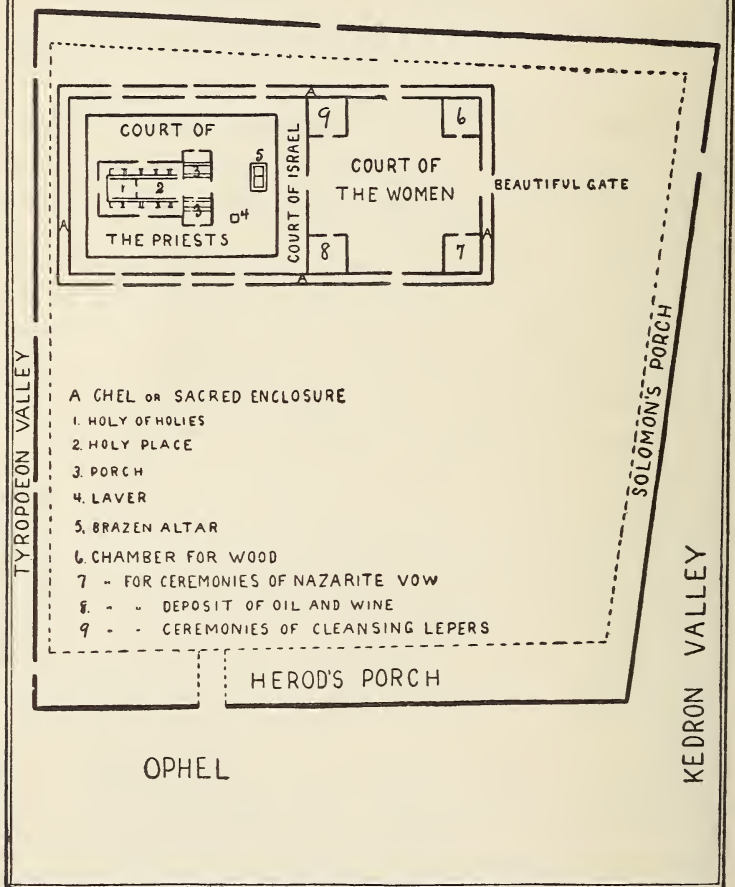
2. THE LAME MAN HEALED.—Acts 3:1-10.

(1) The Apostles on the Way to Service.—Acts 3:1.

(1) Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

The new community, as described in the former chapter, gives an outlook of a year or more over the work of the church. It was not a day nor a week, but a much longer time that they continued in their fourfold training and had their common treasury. Luke now gives an account in the third chapter, belonging to some time in this first or second year, and is one of the many wonders and signs done by the Apostles (2:43). There is no reference anywhere that helps us to fix the precise date. We know that it occurred during the period that the community of goods was kept up. Thus far the laborers of the church had been uninterrupted and had met with the most astonishing success. The temple, however, was still the place of meeting, and later became the place of conflict. The two old friends and partners, fishing on the sea of Galilee, were now at 3 P. M. going to the temple fishing for men. This was the usual hour for sacrifice and prayer. Although the Apostles had their Pentecostal experience, they considered that they could gain the most help and do the most good by continuing their usual methods of worship, and be on hand at the hour of prayer.

TOWER OF ANTONIA



THE TEMPLE.

QUESTIONS.

Name the Apostles.

At what time of the day was it?

What was the stated time for prayer in the Jewish church?
3: 1, cf. Dan. 6: 10; Psa. 55: 17.

(2) The Lame Man at the Gate.—Acts 3: 2.

(2) And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple.

The people assembled for the hour of prayer in that part of the temple called "The Court of the Women." The women were permitted in this part of the temple, but were never allowed to go beyond. This court was 125 cubits square, and was generally thronged with people at the ninth hour. The name "Beautiful" is not found elsewhere, but the door is supposed to be that which led from the Court of the Gentiles to the Court of the Women.

This lame man, who was in that condition from birth, was carried to this gate. He was forty years old. Like this man, the Jewish Nation was helpless, with all its beautiful religious ceremonies, lying outside the Pentecost sanctuary; because of rejection and disobedience, it remains the crooked and helpless generation.

QUESTIONS.

How long had this man been lame?

At what part of the temple was this gate?

(3) The Gift of Healing.—Acts 3: 3-7.

(3) Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. (4) And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. (5) And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. (6) But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. (7) And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength.

Peter and John were on the way to service, but were different from the Priests and Levites because they made the man's need the present duty for service. This beggar must have been at the temple when the Lord went in and out and performed miracles. He may have learned what had transpired on the day of Pentecost, and was happening every day in the early church. "Look on us." Obediently the eyes of the lame man rested upon the Apostles. He expected something, yet there was in store something far greater than he expected. The right look, followed by obedience, brings the blessing. Christ healed while He was with the disciples. The Apostles now heal in Christ's name. The man's faith was strengthened as Peter reached forth his hand and lifted him up. Immediately, not gradually, without a moment's delay, his feet and ankle bones were made strong. Remember Luke, the beloved physician, is the writer of this account.

QUESTIONS.

What did he ask of Peter and John?
What did the Apostles do first, and why?
Did he receive more or less than he asked for?
In whose name and faith was he healed?

(4) The Healed Man.—Acts 3:8.

(8) And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

This man had been lame from his birth, and had never learned to walk. This man's heart was full of thankfulness to God for his great deliverance. He walked and leaped, and entered through the Beautiful Gate into the Court of the Women at a time when it was filled with worshippers.

QUESTIONS.

What did he do when he was healed?
Why did he go into the temple?
Should healed sinners now make the same demonstration?

(5) The Effect on the Multitude.—Acts 3: 9-10.

(9) And all the people saw him walking and praising God: (10) and they took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

Why was this miracle wrought at this time? "Miracles were the bells by which God drew the people together to hear the sermon concerning Jesus." It was to show to these unbelieving Jews that the very Person they had rejected and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles was the Messiah and their King.

QUESTIONS.

Did the people know it was the lame man at the gate?

What did the man do to make this impression on the people?

Peter and John, on the way to church, found this poor cripple and took time to heal him. Many persons are crippled by sin, and have never had the privilege of meeting a Peter and John who could say, "Silver and gold have I none; but what I have that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."

The greatest blessing cannot be purchased by gold and silver.

The man of strong faith must put forth his hand to the man of weak faith, in order that God may be able to glorify His Son among the people.

3. PETER'S SECOND SERMON.—Acts 3: 11-26.**(1) Miracle Explained.—Acts 3: 11-16.**

(11) And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch (or, portico) that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. (12) And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man (or, thing)? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? (13) The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant (or, Child) Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. (14) But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, (15) and killed the Prince (or, Author) of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof (or, of

whom) we are witnesses. (16) And by (or, on the ground of) faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Peter's sermon here is a greater miracle than the cure of the lame man. This address, flowing from the heart of Peter, was planned and set on fire by the Holy Spirit. When the lame man was healed his heart was so filled with praise for the blessing he had obtained, that he could not let Peter and John go. When the people saw that the man was healed and clinging to the persons who were instrumental in his healing, it was noised about and great crowds gathered on the porch, on the east side of the temple. Peter had a sermon ready to suit the people.

The sermon is one intended to bring the crowds to the feet of Jesus, the One who had made the lame man able to walk. Peter does not want the congregation's attention drawn to himself, as the preacher, or the instrument in healing, but to Jesus Christ as the One of Strength and Power.

They should not have been astonished at what had happened to the lame man. One had walked among them who had rebuked the demons, made the lame to walk, opened the eyes of the blind, healed all manner of sickness, and raised people from the dead. This is the Source of Power to which he calls their attention. These cutting statements bring home the truth to his people.

(a) God glorified Him; (b) Ye delivered Him up; (c) Ye denied Him when even the heathen Pilate would have let Him go free; (d) Ye refused a Holy Man, and chose as your idol a murderer; (e) Ye killed the very Prince of Life, but God set Himself against your conduct in that He raised Him from the dead.

You are witnesses to the restoration of this lame man, but this is only part of the great Truth to which we are witnesses. We are not only witnesses to the rejection and crucifixion, but also to His resurrection and ascension. It

was the faith in this very Person that brought perfect soundness to the lame man who was lying at the Beautiful Gate.

QUESTIONS.

Where did Peter preach this sermon?

What was his explanation as to himself and John?

The true teacher always hides behind Christ, calling attention not to himself but to his Master.

What was the design of this miracle?

That God might glorify His Son Jesus.

Why say, "Giving him this perfect soundness"? Can the same soundness be had by the sinner who has been healed in Jesus' name?

The preacher full of the Holy Spirit must be very familiar with his Bible, because it is the Holy Spirit's Text-book.

(2) In Jesus All Men Can Find Salvation.—Acts 3: 17-21.

(17) And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. (18) But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. (19) Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; (20) and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: (21) whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old.

Peter here accounts in a measure for their wicked conduct, but does not excuse it. He calls them "brethren." He is a member of the same nation, and brings them the offer of mercy. Their guilt could not be denied, but God in His great mercy is ready to treat their great sin as a sin of ignorance. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This is Jesus' prayer on the Cross, and He wants them forgiven because of not understanding their deed. God was ready to answer that prayer. This was a national sin and He asked them to repent as a nation, that their sins might be blotted out, because a nation would not accept Christ as a Savior. This does not take away the liberty

of any individual of accepting Christ and of becoming a member of His church. All the Prophets have foretold of the happy days to come. Christ has been received into heaven, and He will come again. This promise of His coming must again have stirred the rulers.

QUESTIONS.

Does ignorance cancel guilt?

God fulfilled the Scriptures, and these Jews seemingly did not know it, because they were ignorant of the real teaching of the Bible, when they were gratifying their own passions.

What had He shown by the Prophets?

What three things are promised to repenters?

(a) Blotting out of sin; (b) seasons of refreshing; (c) returning of Jesus.

(3) In Jesus All Prophecy Is Fulfilled.—Acts 3:22-26.

(22) Moses indeed said, (Deut. 18:15) A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. (23) (Deut. 18:19) And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. (24) Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days. (25) Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, (Gen. 12:3) And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. (26) Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant (or, Child), sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.

Peter proceeds to quote certain passages from the Old Testament, which suggested what he has already said. The Messiah was to be one of themselves (Deut. 18:15-19). He was to be a blessing to every nation on the earth (Gen. 22:18). The One of whom Moses spoke was greater than himself and was none other than Christ. He reminds them also of the testimony of the Prophets to this great truth, from Samuel on. The people to whom he is speaking are children of these Prophets, who had knowledge of these

days, and they are the children of the fathers who had received the covenant from God. Children who have such ancestors should have a spiritual insight into the things of God. It was a great favor that God had for these people in raising His Son, their Savior, and sending Him forth as a blessing unto them, and by His unlimited Power would lift them out of their iniquity into a life of holiness and righteousness.

QUESTIONS.

In what sense was James a prophet like Moses?

Moses differed from all the other prophets in the following: (a) In being a deliverer; (b) in being a lawgiver.

To what other prophets does Peter refer?

Why does Peter now refer to their national sympathy?

4. ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT OF PETER AND JOHN.

Acts 4: 1-4.

(1) And as they spake unto the people, the priests (some ancient authorities read "the chief priests") and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, (2) being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. (3) And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow: for it was now eventide. (4) But many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

The sermon Peter had preached, in which he accused the Jews of having put Christ to death, whom God raised from the dead, and who would return again, stirred the Jewish rulers. It meant to the Jewish nation a revival of all the trouble that they had made for themselves, when Jesus Himself was present. The priests were divided into twenty-four courses, each of whom served a week in the temple. The priests of the text probably were those on duty for that week. The captain of the temple, who led the party making the arrests, was commander of the guards of the Levites stationed in the temple.

The Sadducees were in the lead in the strong opposition against the church, because the Apostles taught through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. They did not believe in the resurrection. The principal thing in which they were interested was that of getting their share of the temple dues. They were not able to separate this teaching of the Apostles from that of the healing of the lame man. This is the first real external opposition to the church. The lame man had been healed about 3 P. M., and the events recorded transpired between the hours of three and six. The Apostles were arrested and put into prison because it was too late in the evening to hold court. The Jewish day ceased at sunset, and it was not lawful to hold court after that hour (Jer. 21:12).

The people who had listened to Peter's sermon, and saw the man with them that was healed, believed, and the membership of the church increased to over five thousand.

QUESTIONS.

Into how many courses were the priests divided? 1 Chron. 24: 1-19.

Who was the captain of the temple?

Why were the Sadducees in the lead?

Give time of healing and time of arrest.

What were the two results of the Apostles' teaching?

(1) Increased opposition of the enemy.

(2) Increase of church membership.

5. TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM.

Acts 4: 5-12.

(5) And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; (6) and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest. (7) And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power, or in what name, have ye done this? (8) Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, (9) if we this day are examined concerning a good deed

done to an impotent man, by what means (or, in whom) this man is made whole; (10) be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him (or, this name) doth this man stand here before you whole. (11) He is (Psa. 118:22) the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. (12) And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

The main body of the Sanhedrim was made up of persons called rulers, elders, and scribes. They met daily near the eastern gate of the temple. It was the lawful court for deciding questions of public worship, interpretations of the Scriptures, and the kind of punishment to be given for any violation of religious rites.

Annas, the high priest, had been appointed about A. D. 7 and deposed by the Roman Procurator, and Caiaphas, his son-in-law, appointed by the same unlawful heathen power, A. D. 14. The Jews regarded Annas, however, as their lawful high priest. John and Alexander are unknown persons. The council must have been mainly composed of Sadducees.

The prisoners were brought in, and the cripple, who had been healed, boldly walked in and took his position close by them. The council asked, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" This was an indefinite question. Peter, directed by the Spirit, answered their question in a way most effective. His opening statement had the sting of sarcasm in it. "If we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man"—charged with the work that is certainly superhuman, not with a crime but with a deed of benevolence. Why did this religious body arrest the Apostles for a deed of benevolence? Was not that a great blunder? Peter shows to this body that their work is in direct opposition to God; shows them that they are fighting against God; that they crucified God's Son. While they destroyed the Son, God in opposition to their

deed, raised Him to life. Now, by the influence of the Power of that life, this man (no doubt pointing to the man who was lame, standing before them healed) is perfect in soul and body. He goes still further and calls their attention to Psa. 118:22. This truth must have startled them. It was no new thing for the leaders of Israel to reject the deliverers whom God had sent them. He closes the address by calling their attention to the fact that there is no salvation for men except in the name of Jesus, whom they crucified. Every human being, who is saved, must be saved in the name of Jesus.

QUESTIONS.

Name persons who were present at court.

Who were Annas and Caiaphas?

Of whom must Peter and John have been reminded? Matt. 10: 17-28.

Why was there no definite charge?

What questions did they ask the Apostles?

What was the real charge Peter made against them?

Jews put to death, but God did the very opposite—He gave life.

State the only means of salvation.

Give Peter's purpose in quoting Psa. 118: 22.

6. SECRET SESSION OF SANHEDRIM.

Acts 4: 13-17.

(13) Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. (14) And seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. (15) But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, (16) saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle (Gr. sign) hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. (17) But that it spread no further among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

Peter's speech before the Sanhedrim was as great a miracle, or greater, than the healing of the lame man, who stood before that body healed. They knew Peter and John had not been trained in their schools, nor educated in their literature, and yet he could speak with greater power and touch the hearts of the people better than any of those who belonged to their own body. They could not understand why such men could gain such power and freedom of speech. The only way they could account for it was their association with Jesus, and in being like Jesus. The greatest need in the Christian church is to get men and women to have Jesus as their daily Companion, so that they themselves may become like Him. The unanswerable argument to these high officials was the man who stood before them as the example of the healing power of Jesus. It was the practice of the court to remove the prisoners while they deliberated on their verdict. They could not deny the truths spoken by Peter, nor set aside the example of healing. But to check this influence and prevent its spreading to others is the thing that must be accomplished. They must frighten them with threats, and charge them that they no more speak to any one in the name of Jesus.

QUESTIONS.

What astonished the council?

Upon what does courage depend?

(1) Upon a firm conviction that we are right; (2) upon faith in God; (3) upon supreme love and devotion for a person or a cause; (4) upon the holy Spirit who gives life and power to the soul.

Why call them "unlearned and ignorant" men?

Who would you say were the ignorant ones?

What does it mean to be with Jesus?

(1) To be with Him in our thoughts; (2) in our hearts; (3) in our motives; (4) in our actions; (5) in person.

What was an unanswerable argument? 14.

Why desire the secret session?

What was their decision?

7. THE APOSTLES' TRIUMPH.

Acts 4: 18-22.

(18) And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. (19) But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: (20) for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard. (21) And they, when they had further threatened them, let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done. (22) For the man was more than forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was wrought.

The Apostles were called back to the hall where the Sanhedrim was assembled to receive the verdict. The prohibition was twofold. They were not to act as public teachers at all, and especially not to speak to the people respecting Jesus. But Peter and John were ambassadors for God, and to be true to Him they must utter the things which they had seen and heard. They ask the council if they think it would be right to set aside their duty and responsibility to God, and be obedient to the demands made upon them by men. They at once informed the Sanhedrim that they could not do anything that would stop them meeting their responsibility to God. This holy courage was the product of the indwelling Spirit. We too need such courage as witnesses for our absent Lord. The only answer that the learned rulers and scribes could give was a renewed threat. They dared not lay hands on the Apostles because of the people. Too many knew what had taken place, and God was glorified by those who had been witnesses of the healing of the lame man.

QUESTIONS.

- What was the report when called back to the council?
- Why were they not to preach and teach in the name of Jesus?
- Give the answer of the Apostles.
- Give rule for obeying earthly rulers.
- What things had they seen and heard?
- Why discharge the prisoners?
- Why call attention to the man's age?

8. THE PRAYER MEETING.—Acts 4: 23-31.**(1) Report of Peter and John to the Church.—Acts 4: 23.**

(23) And being let go, they came to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said unto them.

When the Apostles were released they immediately went to meet with the disciples. They must have had a place for the multitude of converts, where all the disciples could unite in prayer and praise. The body of believers, no doubt, had learned of the arrest of their leaders, and of their imprisonment, and may have spent the entire night in prayer for their deliverance. The Apostles gave an account of their experience before the council, and the verdict that they must no more teach in the name of Jesus. The Apostles experienced the fulfillment of another rich promise made to them by the Lord (Mark 13:9-11).

QUESTIONS.

What was the number of the company to which Peter and John belonged?

What were the definite things that they reported?

What effect had the report upon the church?

(2) The Prayer by the Church.—Acts 4: 24-31.

(24) And they, when they heard it, lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, O Lord (Gr. Master), thou that didst make (or, thou art he that did make) the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: (25) who by the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David thy servant, didst say, (Psa. 2:1,2) Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things?

(26) The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed (Gr. Christ):

(27) For of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, (28) to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel foreordained to come to pass. (29) And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants (Gr. bondservants) to speak thy word with all boldness, (30) while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and

that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant Jesus. (31) And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

The disciples recognize their helplessness. They have been threatened by the same company that put Christ to death, and if they continue to teach it may mean the death of their leaders. They are together as a body of believers and make their appeal to God, not as a Searcher of hearts, or that He might take away their opposition, but as the Mighty One who has created the heavens, the earth and the sea. In their prayer they recite part of the second Psalm. They have the spiritual perception which shows that this prophecy is now theirs. In these verses we have the prophecy. In the New Testament we have the history and fulfillment.

Prophecy	History
Kings	Herod
Rulers	Pilate
Heathen	Gentiles
People	Israel

These Jews fulfilled the voices of their own prophets to whom they listened every Sabbath, by rejecting Jesus, and forbidding the Apostles to speak in His name. The disciples asked in this prayer for just what they wanted. There was one great burden on the hearts of these disciples, and that was to save men and women by telling them about Jesus who died to save them. Their prayer for boldness, to witness for the truth, was answered, but not in a way anticipated by the Apostles. The place was shaken, a new baptism of the Spirit was given to the praying church.

QUESTIONS.

- Why refer to His creative power?
- Name the Psalm from which Peter quoted.
- What threatening did they refer to?
- Why did they want boldness?

(a) That they might have the power to heal; (b) that they might show the power of Jesus' name.

What was God's answer?

Did God manifest His power to the church?

Petitions.

(a) Their adoration to God as Creator of the world; (b) their reconciling themselves to the present dispensation of Providence; (c) the dispensation of Providence by reciting scripture; (d) what was foretold they see being fulfilled; (e) their petition in reference to the case at this time.

Section V. Internal History and Second Persecution. Acts 4: 32-5: 42.

1. THE NEW COMMUNITY.

Acts 4: 32-37.

(32) And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

(33) And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (some ancient authorities add "Christ"): and great grace was upon them all. (34) For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, (35) and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need.

(36) And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas [which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation (or, consolation; see Luke 2: 25; ch. 9: 31; 15: 31; 2 Cor. 1: 3-7, in the Gr.)], a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, (37) having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

The first Christian converts were distinguished by their steadfast attendance on the preaching of the Apostles, living together in fellowship, having the welfare of one another at heart, and frequently having love feasts, accompanied with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and being together much in public prayer. A new stamp was upon this body of believers. They were no longer under the direction of the great council. They were absolutely and definitely under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and would be sub-

ject to the direction of no other body. They were moving out from Judaism, and God was moving with them. Under the influence of this great Power the Apostles magnified Jesus as the living Savior, and the whole community felt inspired under their teaching. Their teaching had a wonderful influence, as indicated by the self-sacrificing spirit of brotherly love, in which each esteemed the other better than himself. Many of those who owned houses and lands, of their own free will, prompted by the love of the brethren, did, from time to time, sell and bring their proceeds to the Apostles.

(1) It was voluntary, coming from the prompting of the inward spirit. 5:4.

(2) It was not universal; every one did not sell his property, nor was it required that every one sell his all. However, it acquired merit and honor for those engaged in these acts of self-sacrifice.

Two examples are cited to show that the selling was really voluntary, and the money from the sale could be used as thought best. The example, Barnabas, was an expression of honor and merit. The other example, at the opening of the next chapter, Ananias and Sapphira, dishonor and disgrace. For some time the Apostles had charge of the distribution of the funds in the common treasury.

“The fires of persecution were kindled to consume the church, but the church members then were like the three heroes in Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace—it did not harm them because the Son of Man was their Companion.”

QUESTIONS.

Give second description of the early church. Cf. 2:42-47.

What is said as to the progress of the church?

What did the Apostles continue to do?

Was this the community for which Christ prayed (John 17:21)?

Should the church be the same now as it was then?

Give meaning of “Great grace was upon them all.”

Tell what is said about Barnabas.

2. DISHONEST CHURCH MEMBERS.—Acts 5:1-11.

(1) The Fate of Ananias.—Acts 5:1-6.

(1) But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, (2) and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. (3) But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to (or, deceive) the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? (4) While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. (5) And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it. (6) And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him.

In the closing verses of the second and third chapters we have beautiful pictures given to us of the love, union, and prosperity of the early church. The church was one in heart and life. The Holy Spirit filled the people. They were united in their efforts to work in harmony, as instructed by Jesus in the Great Commission. It was the work they must do before Jesus returns. The church was doing revival work three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. As this church was so rapidly growing, Satan realized the loss of his interest, and made every effort to fortify himself against the progress of the church. His first effort was from without—to destroy the church by persecution—as we learned in our last paragraph. But his attack was a failure and resulted in a greater manifestation of God. Their faith and courage increased and the church grew in membership. His second attempt to destroy the church was from within. He secured possession of two hearts full of evil motives, ambition and hypocrisy. When God had answered the prayers of the church, by the trembling of the earth, and the men and women truly filled with the Holy Spirit, it was not difficult to keep the common treasury filled with what they needed. A man by the name of Barnabas, born at Cyprus, a Jew by blood, of the priestly tribe

of Levi, had land and sold it and laid the price at the Apostles' feet. This man's benevolent act, no doubt, was rewarded by some honor and praise from the congregation. Others would like to receive this honor, without giving the possessions. Ananias and Sapphira made an effort, by deception, to receive it. There are many other ways of securing honor and blessing in the church, not merely by money; and if done with a view of deceiving and not paying full value for it, then there is the spirit of Ananias and Sapphira. In some way, we do not know just how, Peter detected the fraud, and the accusation was, "Satan hath filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit." Peter repeated the charge in different terms. "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." His punishment was death. He was carried forth and buried.

(2) The Fate of Sapphira.—Acts 5:7-11.

(7) And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. (8) And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much. (9) But Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out. (10) And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband. (11) And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

About three hours later the wife came into the assembly, not knowing what had happened to her husband. Peter now asked her a question, and she answered. He declared to her that they had agreed upon this deception, and told her that the sin committed was against the Spirit of the Lord. She, too, fell dead, as did her husband, and the young men came forth and buried her by the side of her husband. This is the first account we have of church discipline. This is given as a warning to all who profess to

belong to church, to be honest in their relation to the church treasury. All you need to do is to imitate Ananias and Sapphira if you want to know, by actual experience, what their punishment was. We should be very careful in making exaggerated statements as to our giving, and not be tempted to understate our value of wealth in order to escape what is really our part to give. Such rigid discipline would naturally bring fear upon the whole church. It would not be the church with which deceivers and hypocrites would want to unite. It gave the church a holy character.

QUESTIONS.

What was the purpose of Ananias and Sapphira?

Was it wrong for Ananias and Sapphira not to bring all their possessions?

What was Ananias willing to pay for the same honor Barnabas had?

Against whom did Ananias and Sapphira lie?

Can people lie against the same Person now?

How much later did Sapphira go to the meeting?

How was she kept ignorant of the death and burial of her husband?

What effect had this severe punishment upon the church and people?

Give a full description of this first case of discipline in the early church.

3. SACREDNESS OF THE CHURCH.

Acts 5: 12-16.

(12) And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people: and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch (or, portico). (13) But of the rest durst no man join himself to them: howbeit the people magnified them; (14) and believers were the more added to the Lord (or, and there were the more added to them, believing on the Lord), multitudes both of men and women: (15) insomuch that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, as Peter came by, at the least his shadow might overshadow some one of them. (16) And there also came together

the multitude from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

Satan made his attack from within, by getting into the heart of this family; but his presence being immediately detected, and his subjects punished by death and burial, the church was again in a position to grow in spirit and power. The Apostles, with the disciples, were on Solomon's porch, and many signs and wonders were done by the Apostles. They were still holding their position of authority. The sick were healed, unclean spirits were driven out, the reputation of this powerful church spread to the neighboring towns and brought the sick and they were healed. Peter was held in such high esteem that his very shadow was coveted by the people. The church is not a human creation; it is the House of God. Such a church is what the earnest seeker looks for as his spiritual home.

QUESTIONS.

Name some of the signs and wonders of the Apostles.

Give meaning of "of the rest durst no man join themselves to them."

After the hypocrites were so severely punished by the church, others who pretended to be what they were not, were afraid to unite with the sacred church.

What effect had the discipline on the revival?

Why more miracles than before?

How may sickness be an advantage to the church now?

Was there any power in Peter's shadow to heal?

4. IMPRISONMENT AND PROOF OF APOSTLES' CREDENTIALS.

Acts 5: 17-20.

(17) But the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy, (18) and laid hands on the apostles, and put them in public ward. (19) But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out, and said, (20) 'Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple all the words of this Life.

He made his third attack from without by arousing the dignified Sanhedrim to go forth as an army to enforce the command that the church must no longer teach in the name of Jesus. The disciples had said in the council, "We can not but speak the things we have seen and heard." The Apostles were arrested, treated as common criminals, and put into the public prison. The Sadducees were quite prominent in making this second arrest. God, however, gives His unmistakable approval of the course of His Apostles; during the night He sends an Angel to open the doors of the prison, and brings them forth and says, "Go, stand and speak in the temple, to the people, all the words of this life." They had been given Divine credentials as Heaven's authorized teachers of the truth.

QUESTIONS.

Who was the high priest?

What had offended the Sadducees?

How many Apostles were imprisoned this time?

Compare this imprisonment with the former imprisonment.

What is the source of preachers' and teachers' credentials now?

Give proof of Divine credentials.

(1) God's miraculous care of them. "The Angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors and brought them forth"; (2) Ensuing consciousness of their own exalted position. The Apostles had commands from the Angel—"Go, stand and speak in the temple, to the people, all the words of this Life."

5. APOSTLES ON TRIAL.

Acts 5:21-28.

(21) And when they heard this, they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison-house to have them brought. (22) But the officers that came found them not in the prison; and they returned, and told, (23) saying, The prison-house we found shut in all safety, and the keepers standing at the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

(24) Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were much perplexed concerning them whereunto this would grow. (25) And there came one and told them, Behold, the men whom ye put in the prison are in the temple standing and teaching the people. (26) Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, but without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. (27) And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, (28) saying, We strictly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

The council had threatened them, that they might speak no more in the name of Jesus. They disobeyed. By their teaching their influence was spreading. The council arrested them again, put them into prison, but some one released them. They found them in the morning in the very temple, teaching in the name of Jesus. The Sanhedrim was perplexed because of the disappearance of the prisoners. This was to them a mystery, and they could not help attributing it to the working of the Miraculous Power with which they knew the Apostles were endowed. They questioned among themselves, "What will be the final outcome?" They received the report that they were found teaching in the temple. They were invited to appear before the council. They were brought in without violence because of the influence of the common people.

Here all the Apostles learn by experience that the One whom they serve is mightier in power than the united strength of the enemy. They did not stop teaching in the name of Jesus because of opposition. The truth that the disciples taught troubled the Jews.

QUESTIONS.

When and what did they teach?

Why did the keeper not know of their escape?

Where did they find the Apostles?

Why did they bring them without violence?

What was the charge against them?

Contrast: The Apostles feared God, but not even the greatest of the Jewish rulers. The Sanhedrim feared the people, but did not fear God.

6. APOSTLES PREACH GOSPEL TO THE RULERS.

Acts 5: 29-32.

(29) But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men. (30) The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. (31) Him did God exalt with (or, at) his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. (32) And we are witnesses (some ancient authorities add "in him") of these things (Gr. sayings); and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him (some ancient authorities read "and God hath given the Holy Spirit to them that obey him").

The Sanhedrim made two charges against the Apostles. First, they had been disobedient to the Sanhedrim in not heeding the command, not to teach any more in the name of Jesus. Second, they had made an attempt to bring upon the Sanhedrim the blood of Jesus. The Sanhedrim realized the fact that if the present teaching would be continued and miracles would be wrought, the influence would grow so rapidly and take such a hold on the common people, that the Sanhedrim itself might be taken to task for having condemned Jesus of Nazareth. They spoke of Jesus as "This Man" and "This Name." The Apostles plead guilty to the charge of being disobedient to the Sanhedrim, but they said in reference to this disobedience, "We ought to obey God rather than men." The second charge they met with courage, and accused them of the fact that it was innocent blood which they had shed, which was shown by the Resurrection. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree." The Holy Spirit is witness that God the Father has exalted His Son, who now sits at His right hand. When you crucified Him, He asked God to forgive you. And now He offers you forgiveness upon condition that you will repent. We stand here before you as witnesses, and so does the Holy Spirit, who is the Gift of God unto all who obey Him.

QUESTIONS.

Who did the preaching of the Gospel to the rulers?

Give the sermon that was preached to these rulers.

The Apostles showed: (1) Their conduct was right, ver. 29. (2) That they were true to the God of the Jews, 30. (3) The rulers had tried before to put a stop to the Gospel—"Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." (4) They utterly failed, for they were fighting against God, 39. "Him hath God exalted." (5) With all their guilt, God still desires to save them—"To give repentance." (6) The Apostles' own testimony of the facts—"We are His witnesses," 32. (7) For the testimony of the Holy Spirit. "And so is the Holy Spirit."

7. GAMALIEL'S ADDRESS TO THE COURT.

Acts 5: 33-39.

(33) But they, when they heard this, were cut to the heart, and were minded to slay them. (34) But there stood up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in honor of all the people, and commanded to put the men forth a little while. (35) And he said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves as touching these men, what ye are about to do. (36) For before these days rose up Theudas, giving himself out to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed, and came to nought. (37) After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the enrolment, and drew away some of the people after him: he also perished; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered abroad. (38) And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown: (39) but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God.

When the truth was presented by the Apostles to the Sanhedrim it had an effect opposite to that which truth has upon honest hearts. It maddened them; they plotted to murder the twelve men, as they had before murdered Him in whose name they were teaching. From what we know of the high priest, we are sure he would not have scrupled to adopt this method. The Sanhedrim was not wholly composed of the Sadducees, but was made up of the two

religious bodies, Pharisees and Sadducees. Between these two parties there existed a long-standing and ever-increasing enmity. They held widely different religious views. It was this difference, or enmity, between the two that God used to save the lives of His servants. While the Sadducees were thus plotting to put to death these twelve men, Gamaliel, a Pharisee, a doctor of the law, a man of great reputation, arose, and after ordering the prisoners to be removed, addressed the Sanhedrim. He warned them as to the method they would use in getting rid of the difficulty they had on hand. "If these men are ambassadors of God and working by His direction and authority, it would be in vain for you to oppose them, for in so doing you would be opposing God. If their work is simply of men, or directed by men, their work will come to naught, as did that of Theudas and Judas of Galilee."

QUESTIONS.

What effect had the sermon on the rulers?

Why were they not willing to obey the sermon?

Who was Gamaliel and give a full account of what he did?

Why did they want a secret session?

What is the difference between a Sadducee and a Pharisee?

In what way did he warn the rulers?

Give meaning of "If this counsel be of men, it will be overthrown."

8. SCOURGING AND RELEASE OF THE APOSTLES.

Acts 5: 40-42.

(40) And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles unto them, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. (41) They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. (42) And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach (Gr. bring good tidings of) Jesus as the Christ.

The advice given by Gamaliel, the Pharisee, restrained the council from shedding blood. We are told that the council agreed; but if they agreed, why did they beat the Apostles? The Sadducees must have insisted on at least this much punishment before releasing them, to give them another opportunity to be obedient to their command. The beating was according to Deut. 25:2-3. The law of Moses limited the scourge to forty stripes, and the judges had a right to decide for what offenses they should be inflicted. It is probable that the Apostles received thirty-nine stripes apiece, on the bare back. The Apostles, however, having such a deep interest in the redemption of man, when they were released after suffering this terrible beating, departed from the council "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name." They continued, nothing could hinder them. When the Holy Spirit rests upon the believer, as He did in the time of the early church, no matter what suffering must be endured, joy is always the experience. By this time all Jerusalem was filled with their doctrine. Their religion was not a monthly or weekly matter, but required their attention every day. The early church had a daily religion. Would a religion that required as much time as it did in the early church be practical now?

QUESTIONS.

Why did they scourge the Apostles?

What was the charge of the council?

In what respect did this deliverance from the council differ from the former?

In what did the Apostles rejoice?

Do the Christians now have as much reason to rejoice as then?

Give six important lessons that you received from the study of this chapter.

Section VI. Internal History and Third Persecution. Acts 6: 1-8: 4.

1. Church Superior to Internal Difficulties.

Acts 6: 1-7.

(1) Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews (Gr. Hellenists) against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. (2) And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit (Gr. pleasing) that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables (or, minister to tables). (3) Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. (4) But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. (5) And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaüs a proselyte of Antioch; (6) whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them.

(7) And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

The church ever oscillates between two opposite but hostile forces—persecution from without, and dissension from within. Luke had just completed his account of the second persecution from without, followed by a period of peace, love, and increase of church membership, and now gives us description of the third persecution from without. The church had been growing rapidly and this brought about greater difficulty in providing for the church treasury, and the daily distribution of allowances to the needy from the common fund. While the church was small, there was little danger for accidental or intentional neglect in the daily distribution of alms. The Apostles had charge of this duty, but as believers were multiplied, and the opposition increased from without, their time was wholly occupied in the ministry of the Word, and the distribution was made by

persons appointed by them. And here may be some cause for this neglect.

There were two classes of Jews in Jerusalem, the foreign-born and the home-born. The Grecians were Greek-speaking Jews, born in countries outside of Palestine, and therefore called Hellenists, or Grecians. Between the native and foreign-born Jews there existed considerable jealousy; because of this feeling it would be difficult to distribute the fund to the needy without some criticism from either party. The orthodox Jew was a strict observer of the law and tradition of the Elders, and was the means of putting Christ to death, because He opposed the tradition of the Elders, although His teaching was in full harmony and spirit of the Old Testament.

The foreign-born Jews, having been educated in different parts of the world, having come in contact with broader educational influences, were more liberal and open to the reception of truth. The wrong-doing could, however, not be justified. The Apostles summoned a meeting of all the Christians in Jerusalem, and stated that they could no longer be responsible for the distribution of the fund, inasmuch as it would interfere with their giving themselves wholly to prayer, teaching and preaching the Word. They left the matter entirely in the hands of the church. The Apostles, however, suggested the appointment of seven men, who had these three qualifications, "of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," to take charge of this work now causing disturbance in the church.

The church should look after her own work, even to the feeding of the hungry widows, and not burden the ministers, whose whole time should be given to prayer, teaching and preaching the Word.

The church accepted the suggestion of the Apostles, and made choice of seven deacons, and brought them to the Apostles, who ordained them by prayers and imposition of hands. The Holy Spirit was present in the church, and

the Apostles, being but agents, were under His direction, and it was easy to correct this difficulty. The church continued in peace and prosperity. It is strange, however, that the seven persons were selected from that part of the church which had made the complaint. Those who had time to complain could not assist in this distribution, and see that no complaint was made from the other side.

If it was not right then to serve tables and neglect preaching the Word is it right now? Here the church trouble was adjusted by the increase of laborers and church membership.

QUESTIONS.

What was the difficulty in the church?

What two classes of Jews? Give history of each.

What was the work that could not be neglected by the Apostles?

Why say "disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly"?

To intimate that there were none elsewhere, and the disciples have been left here long enough to test whether Israel would repent, and secure the privileges spoken of by Peter (3: 19-20).

Who was to select the seven men and what three qualifications?

Name these seven new church officials.

What part had the Apostles in selecting?

They had a consecration meeting: (1) By having prayer; (2) by the laying on of hands.

What effect had this upon the church?

(1) It gave the church more laborers; (2) laborers of broader views; (3) it increased Bible study in the church; (4) resulted in a great revival.

Give the texts which show the increase of membership during the first five years of the church.

(1) At ascension at least 120 (1:15). (2) At Pentecost, 3000 were added (2:41). (3) A month or more later this number was increased to over 5000 (4:4). (4) During the next two or three years multitudes of men and women were added (5:14). (5) When the seven workers were added to the church, the number of converts "multiplied in Jerusalem greatly," and a great company of priests were obedient to the faith. Church membership increases rapidly when converts are added daily to the church.

2. STEPHEN'S ACTIVITY AND ARREST.

Acts 6:8-15.

(8) And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people. (9) But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called the synagogue of the Libertines (or, Freedmen), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. (10) And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. (11) Then they suborned men, who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. (12) And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council, (13) and set up false witnesses, who said, This man ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and the law: (14) for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us. (15) And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

The church was now on the verge of a great crisis. Twice before, as the church was increasing so rapidly in power and numbers, the unbelievers set themselves up against the progress of the church by way of persecution. The appointment of the seven men, to distribute alms, had an outcome not anticipated. These men, with broader views and open hearts for the truth, opened the door for the church to go forth to evangelize the world. Pentecost was about five years in the past, and the risen Christ had not yet been preached outside the city of Jerusalem. This was the first exhibition of miraculous power by any other disciple but an Apostle.

Stephen, fully given over to the influence of the power of the Holy Spirit, was able by truth to meet the opposition brought against him. The parties here mentioned are Greek-speaking Jews; they loved to meet together, and had a synagogue of their own. Stephen, being one of them, doubtless was a member of the synagogue before he was a Christian, and although a Christian had not forfeited his

membership. It would be but natural for him to go to the synagogue and try to lead his associates to Jesus as their Savior. In the discussion the argument and power were all on Stephen's side, for the reason that he was the Holy Spirit's messenger. Unable to meet Stephen in argument and resist the "wisdom and spirit with which he spake," they perverted his language and represented him to the people as a blasphemer against Moses and against God. "Suborned men." These dishonest men are willing to be used to make false accusations. These accusations appeal to all their selfish interests. These enemies of the Truth understood very well the feeling of the Jewish people, that nothing would incite them more against Christianity, than the belief that it was to supersede their much loved Judaism. The church was looked upon with suspicion, and if Christianity was to triumph it could only be on the ruins of Judaism.

The common people, by the means described, were thoroughly aroused and there was no longer any danger of their taking sides with the church. Stephen was at once arrested and dragged before the Sanhedrim. This was the first time that the people were represented as being stirred up against the disciples.

The Pharisees avoided the blunder committed by the Sadducees, of bringing men into trial without having definite charges against them. The charge laid against Stephen was that of blasphemy, especially that he said Jesus of Nazareth claimed that He would destroy the temple and change the customs which Moses had delivered. Stephen was now standing before the same body where his Master stood, when condemned to die. He was arraigned on a similar charge. He realized that his supreme hour had come. He knew the feeling of the court, and it was not their purpose to try him but to condemn him. Stephen was not alone. He was in the midst of Holy Associates. God Himself manifested His presence in an outer visible form. Even

these wicked men were permitted to see this miraculous brightness which made his face appear as the face of an angel.

QUESTIONS.

Why was Stephen able to do such great work among the people?

If Stephen distributed alms what opportunity gave it to him for greater work?

In what synagogues arose the opposition to Stephen?

(1) Libertines—the synagogue for foreign Jews, who were Roman captives, and had been set at liberty by their captors. “Tacitus speaks of 10,000 Libertine Jews.” (2) Cyrenians—immigrants from Cyrene, on the north of Africa. (3) Alexandrians—Jews from the city of Alexandria, in northern Egypt, near the Mediterranean Sea. (4) Cilicia—province of Asia Minor, with Tarsus as its capital. Saul, no doubt, was a member of this synagogue, as he was born at Tarsus, and was the disciple of Gamaliel, and one of the most active opposers. (5) Asia—a Roman province, of Asia Minor, with Ephesus as its capital.

Why did these foreign-born Jews oppose the teaching of Stephen?

Because they were under special teachers, who taught that the tradition of the elders was of equal importance with the inspired Word of God.

How did they secure false witnesses?

Who stirred up the common people?

This is the first opposition noted coming from the common people. The Jewish rulers, at different times, desired to do with the Apostles what is here done with Stephen, but they feared the people.

What were the two charges against Stephen?

What shows Stephen’s real contrast with that of his accusers?

3. STEPHEN’S SERMON.—Acts 7: 1-53.

(1) Age of Abraham.—Acts 7: 1-8.

(1) And the high priest said, Are these things so? (2) And he said,

Brethren and fathers, hearken: The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, (3) and said unto him, Get thee out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show

thee. (4) Then came he out of the land of the Chaldæans, and dwelt in Haran: and from thence, when his father was dead, God removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell: (5) and he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: and he promised that he would give it to him in possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. (6) And God spake on this wise, that his seed should sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring them into bondage, and treat them ill, four hundred years. (7) And the nation to which they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. (8) And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs.

Stephen's sermon can only be understood when the charges made against him are kept in mind. Stephen, in the face of this bitter opposition, is true to the Holy Spirit, who directs his defense, and the Old Testament, from which he gathers proof of his innocence, and the guilt of those who made the charge. He begins his sermon with Abraham, the great father of the nation. The God of glory appeared unto Abraham while he was yet in Mesopotamia, before he received his call at Haran. This glory that appeared unto Abraham, Stephen himself experienced when his testimony was finished before these Jewish rulers and the Lord Himself appeared unto him in glory. God had called him out of the land of idolatry and Abraham had gone forth in faith, and God led him into the land of Canaan. He himself received not the inheritance, only by promise. He did not get into this promised land for a day, a month, or a year. The covenant of circumcision was not given him until nearly the close of his days.

QUESTIONS.

Who was the presiding officer of the Sanhedrim?

State clearly the charge made against Stephen.

How did Stephen address his hearers?

Where, when, and how often was Abraham called?

How many years was he in bondage?

The period of four hundred years is taken by Stephen from Gen. 15: 13 as the time during which the seed of Abraham sojourned, not including the thirty years of his own sojourn before the birth of Isaac. The time of actual sojourn from the call of Abraham from Ur of Chaldees to exodus from Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.

(2) The Age of Joseph.—Acts 7: 9-16.

(9) And the patriarchs, moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt: and God was with him, (10) and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. (11) Now there came a famine over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. (12) But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent forth our fathers the first time. (13) And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's race became manifest unto Pharaoh. (14) And Joseph sent, and called to him Jacob his father, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. (15) And Jacob went down into Egypt; and he died, himself and our fathers; (16) and they were carried over into Shechem, and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a price in silver of the sons of Hamor (Gr. Emmor) in Shechem.

When Joseph's brothers through envy sold him, God was with him. It was God who delivered him out of all of his afflictions. And by Joseph's faithfulness and God's favor, he became the governor of the land of Egypt. It was not until Joseph was made governor of Egypt that the family had increased to seventy-five and were invited to dwell in the land of Egypt, and receive blessings and favors from him whom they had sold. At this time the promised land was only theirs by anticipation, and they still bought land in which to be buried.

QUESTIONS.

Who sold Joseph and why?

Recite the story of Joseph dealing with his brethren when they came to Egypt to buy corn.

Whom did Joseph save?

Who were included in the seventy-five?

Where was Jacob buried?

Who bought the sepulchre from the sons of Hamor? (Gen. 33: 19-20.)

(3) Age of Moses.—Acts 7:17-43.

a. The First Period.—Acts 7:17-28.

(17) But as the time of the promise drew nigh which God vouchsafed unto Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, (18) till there arose another king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. (19) The same dealt craftily with our race, and ill-treated our fathers, that they should cast out their babes to the end they might not live. (20) At which season Moses was born, and was exceeding fair; and he was nourished three months in his father's house: (21) and when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. (22) And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works. (23) But when he was well-nigh forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. (24) And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, smiting the Egyptian: (25) and he supposed that his brethren understood that God by his hand was giving them deliverance (or salvation); but they understood not. (26) And the day following he appeared unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? (27) But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? (28) Wouldest thou kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian yesterday?

In Moses these people boasted eternally. He is their great lawgiver and the one to whom they point as the deliverer from the Egyptian bondage. What was his experience when he came first to his own people to deliver them? They rejected him. Thus, when the time drew near for the delivery from bondage, the people were not ready for it, and had to wait forty years, during Moses' sojourn at Mount Sinai.

QUESTIONS.

Where did Moses spend the first forty years of his life?

Why did the King of Egypt not know Joseph?

What was the purpose of destroying the male children?

Give story of Moses being kept before Pharaoh's daughter took him.

Where did Moses get his education?

What was his early religious training?

Why did Israel not recognize Moses as the deliverer?

b. Moses' Second Period.—Acts 7:29-34.

(29) And Moses fled at this saying, and became a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons. (30) And when forty years were fulfilled, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. (31) And when Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold, there came a voice of the Lord, (32) I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. And Moses trembled, and durst not behold. (33) And the Lord said unto him, Loose the shoes from thy feet: for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. (34) I have surely seen the affliction of my people that is in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I am come down to deliver them: and now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

Moses had to flee into a strange land and be among strangers for forty years. After his forty years' stay the Angel of the Lord appeared to him. Although Moses had been rejected as their deliverer, God had appointed him to the very office which they refused him. God knew the condition of the people in bondage and also knew of the people's rejection, and God meant to deliver them through Moses, their leader.

QUESTIONS.

Give history of the second forty years while Moses was in Midian.

Why did Moses flee when he was to be deliverer?

The people were not ready to be delivered, and while Moses had intellectual culture, he was in need of forty years' schooling in the wilderness, with God as his Teacher.

What did Moses hear at the burning bush?

Does God know when his children are persecuted?

Who really delivered the children of Israel?

c. The Third Period.—Acts 7:35-41.

(35) This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? him hath God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer (Gr. redeemer) with the hand of the angel that appeared to him in the bush. (36) This man led them forth, having wrought wonders and signs in Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilder-

ness forty years. (37) This is that Moses, who said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. (38) This is he that was in the church (or, congregation) in the wilderness with the angel that spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received living oracles to give unto us: (39) to whom our fathers would not be obedient, but thrust him from them, and turned back in their hearts unto Egypt, (40) saying unto Aaron, Make us gods that shall go before us: for as for this Moses, who led us forth out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. (41) And they made a calf in those days, and brought a sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands.

God appointed Moses to deliver the people, and he brought them forth after showing many wonders in Egypt and in the wilderness. After this wonderful deliverance, the march to Mount Sinai, giving of the law, they rejected Moses after he had accomplished the main part of their deliverance. Although they rejected Moses, God made it possible for him to complete the deliverance which he had begun.

QUESTIONS.

What did Moses do during the third period of his life?

When did they refuse Moses as their deliverer?

Who was the prophet like unto Moses?

Stephen showed it was right to be true to the teaching of Moses, and therefore they should also be true to the Prophet who was to be like Moses—Jesus whom they crucified.

Why did the fathers not obey Moses?

The hearers of Stephen accused him of speaking against Moses and the law, and he showed how their fathers had treated Moses.

d. God's Final Rejection of Israel.—Acts 7:42-43.

(42) But God turned, and gave them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, (Amos 5:25 ff) Did ye offer unto me slain beasts and sacrifices Forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?

(43) And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of the god Rephan, the figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

Israel had rejected their divinely-appointed leaders and deliverers during a period of many centuries. The speaker passes over a large part of Jewish history, from the worshiping of the golden calf at Mount Sinai to the announcement of the Babylonian captivity by the prophet Amos.

QUESTIONS.

Why did God turn from His people?

Give the quotations from the book of Amos.

What offerings are acceptable to God?

What did they worship instead of God?

The Jews had many idols, and here Stephen is defending himself because many of the Jews had become such strict ritualists that they were worshiping the temple instead of God, who cannot be confined in any temple made by man's hand.

(4) The Tabernacle and Temple.—Acts 7: 44-50.

(44) Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as he appointed who spake unto Moses, that he should make it according to the figure that he had seen. (45) Which also our fathers, in their turn, brought in with Joshua (Gr. Jesus) when they entered on the possession of the nations (or, Gentiles), that God thrust out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; (46) who found favor in the sight of God, and asked to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. (47) But Solomon built him a house. (48) Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands; as saith the prophet,

(49) (Isa. 66: 1 f) The heaven is my throne, and the earth the footstool of my feet: what manner of house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?

(50) Did not my hand make all these things?

Stephen now takes up the charge of speaking for the purpose of destroying the temple. He first speaks to them about the movable building, known as the tabernacle, and of its perishable nature; this tabernacle was superseded by the temple. David desired to build this temple, but it was not built by him but by his son Solomon. But the Most High dwells not in places made by hands. Solomon himself had made this declaration. The temple, great as it was, could

not be great enough to contain the living God ; the building made with hands could not contain Him who has made by His own Hand all things.

QUESTIONS.

When was the tabernacle built?

How did the Jews know how to build it?

When did the people first have a fixed place of worship?

When the Jews were on their way from Egypt to Palestine, the tabernacle was built, but it was a movable house.

Where is the Lord's dwelling place?

God has a higher dwelling place than a temple made with hands. So man has a higher dwelling place than the temple (the body) that must perish.

(5) The Application.—Acts 7: 51-53.

(51) Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. (52) Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them that showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; (53) ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not.

Stephen has shown to his hearers these four special things that are proof of his innocence, and shows their own guilt. God's dealings with His people show constant progress. Abraham did not get into the promised land immediately. It took a number of years from the time Joseph was sold until he was governor of Egypt. Stephen is a live religious wire, and therefore believes in progress. The people to whom he is talking are dead and cannot be moved. The second thing that he teaches them is that the temple is not exclusively holy. Of all the good things to which Stephen points, Israel does not possess one part from the heathen land, except the temple, and that, we know, was not large enough to make God's absolute abiding place. Wherever God is, there is His sanctuary. If God goes to the Gentiles now, that will make them acceptable. The

third thing he had taught, that invariably Israel rejected the deliverers sent, suffered a while in consequence, and then accepted that very deliverance afterwards. Joseph was sold by his brethren; later they accepted him as their deliverer.

Moses came to deliver his people, and they rejected him the first time. God sent him the second time, and Moses led them forth into the wilderness. The people again deserted his guidance until Joshua led them into their possession. The lesson in all this is very evident. The Jews now by their opposition rejected not Moses or Joseph, but Jesus who is the Deliverer sent them by their Father. He charged the nation with their long-continued crime—its murder of the Just One.

QUESTIONS.

What did he call his hearers?

Whom did they imitate?

Give chief points in the application.

Joseph, the Divinely-selected savior of his brethren, had been sold by those brethren into slavery. Moses, the Divinely-selected deliverer of Israel from bondage, was at first rejected by them and became a sojourner in Midian. He was sent back by the God of their fathers, to be rejected again and again, notwithstanding God's manifestations were made so that they could know him as their deliverer. The prophets met with a similar fate, and now the final Prophet, Jesus Himself, is slain by the sons of these persecuting fathers.

How was the law received by them?

The Jews received the Law by the disposition of angels. This put an honor on the Law and the Lawgiver, and should have increased their veneration for both. The Jews, to whom Stephen was speaking, received the Gospel by the disposition, not of angels, but of the Holy Spirit in the gift of tongues, and yet they did not receive it.

4. STEPHEN, THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR.

Acts 7: 54-8: 4.

(1) **Condemned and Executed.**—Acts 7: 54-60.

(54) Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. (55) But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven,

and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, (56) and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. (57) But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; (58) and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. (59) And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. (60) And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

These bold and truthful statements had the effect of arousing the Sanhedrim to madness. They were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth. But Stephen, full of faith and courage in his Lord, turned from the angry mob, and directed his gaze towards heaven. There he beheld the sight that gave him courage in this hour of trial, and made him bold to resist every influence of this unholy and unrighteous body. He saw the Lord, not sitting, but standing, as it were to welcome him. This vision related by Stephen increased their anger and they gave expression to their feelings in a loud cry. To show their disapproval, they stopped their ears so they might not be compelled to hear any more, and ran upon him with one accord. Stephen was dragged out of the city, and there stoned. The last moments he spent in praying for his murderers. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." And after he said this he fell asleep, and we have the name of the first martyr of the Christian church.

QUESTIONS.

What cut the hearers to the heart?

What did Stephen see when the hearers became angry?

What was the purpose of this open Heaven and the visible Christ?

It was designed in this crisis to give strength to faith, and so give a tone of triumph to this final testimony. It was another testimony to what Christ had foretold to the same council, "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of God."

Did this angry mob wait for a legal decision?

They took the law in their own hands and the solemn Sanhedrim was turned into a mob of murderers.

Who took care of the clothes of witnesses?

What was Stephen's prayer when he was stoned?

Give the prayer he gave for his enemies.

Who was the conquering party in this victory?

The mightiest blow against the kingdom of evil was struck by that apparent victory. The persecution that followed scattered the disciples, each one a burning and shining light, over the whole country.

(2) Progress Through Persecution.—Acts 8:1-4.

(1) And Saul was consenting unto his death.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles.

(2) And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. (3) But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison.

(4) They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word.

Saul, who was carrying forward at this time bitter opposition by way of persecution, himself consented and witnessed the stoning. The young men who stoned Stephen laid their clothes down at Saul's feet. The conduct of the Sanhedrim, however, did not meet with universal approval. There were devout men among the people who were grieved and manifested their sorrow by making great lamentations over Stephen and giving him a decent burial. These devout men were Jews and not believers. Every effort had been made to check the progress of the growth of the church by the opposition to the truth so earnestly preached by the leaders of that body. They have now an example in the death of Stephen, what the devoted follower of Jesus will do. This persecution had not stopped the good work of the church. Hitherto the Gospel seemed to have been preached only by a few, and now the followers of Jesus are scattered abroad and in many places Jesus Christ is held up as the Light of the world.

QUESTIONS.

Who was consenting unto his death?

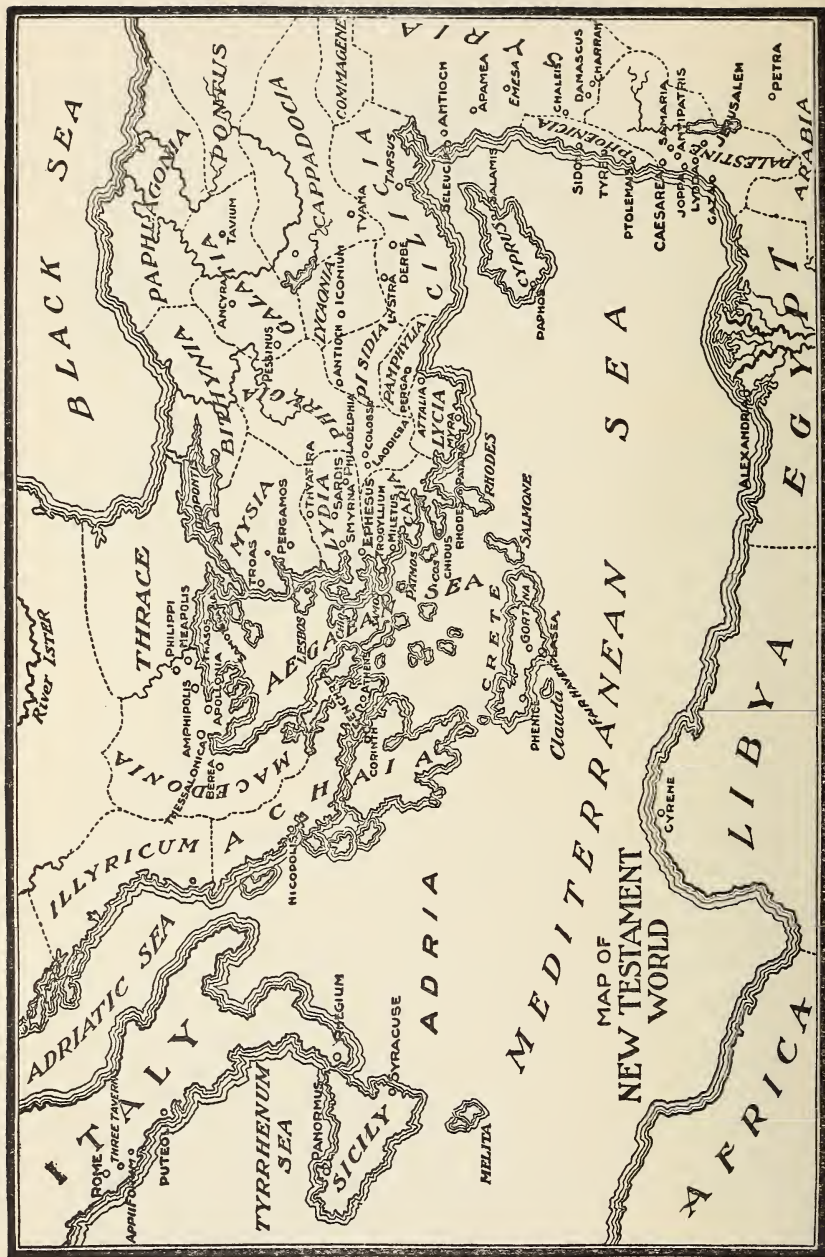
Who was the leader in the persecution?

What is said about Stephen's burial?

Who made havoc of the church?

What effect had it on the church in Jerusalem?

It spread the Gospel into a new field. Every member of the church, who was active, taught the same doctrine of Stephen, and church members did not wait to be authorized to tell the story of Jesus, but were so deeply interested in the mission of the church that they went everywhere telling the story.



PART II

THE CHURCH IN PALESTINE.

Acts 8: 5 to 12: 25.

From the Death of Stephen, A. D. 36, to Paul's First
Missionary Journey, A. D. 46 (Ten Years).

Section I. Philip's Missionary Work.

Acts 8: 5-40.

1. PHILIP'S SUCCESS IN SAMARIA.

Acts 8: 5-13.

(5) And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ. (6) And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did. (7) For from many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. (8) And there was much joy in that city.

(9) But there was a certain man, Simon by name, who beforetime in the city used sorcery, and amazed the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: (10) to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is that power of God which is called Great. (11) And they gave heed to him, because that of long time he had amazed them with his sorceries. (12) But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. (13) And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles (Gr. powers) wrought, he was amazed.

The disciples had been witnesses in Jerusalem, but persecution had driven them into new fields, and during these

ten years laborers were multiplied. The scattered church went everywhere, preaching the Word, in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. Only the Apostles remained in Jerusalem. Why the persecution did not drive out the twelve is not specifically stated. God, no doubt, guided and kept them there. It may be possible, the reason they were not arrested and put into prison, was because they were native-born and not Hellenists, like the seven who were carrying forward the aggressive movement at this time in the church, which resulted in the death of one of the seven and the scattering of the church.

After the death of Stephen, Philip, not an Apostle, but a Grecian Jew, also one of the seven, who had been called to look after the poor, became an evangelist and opened a new missionary field in Samaria. The first work out of Jerusalem was under the direction of the Lord, through Philip as the instrument, to do this missionary work. It was here in Samaria where the Lord himself had the conversation with the Samaritan woman, and through his teaching many believed on him. It was a good place to open a missionary field. The Samaritans are a mixed race and a stepping stone between Jews and Gentiles.

Philip, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, preached Christ to these Samaritans, and confirmed his preaching by miracles. The people gave heed to his preaching and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. His mission was to help people who were under the influence of evil spirits and diseases.

When these people realized the helpfulness of the religion that Philip was bringing to them, there was great joy in that city. There was one man of great influence in the city, who was a special instrument of Satan. His mission was to keep these people in darkness and lead those away from the light who had been under the influence of Christ, whom Philip preached some six years earlier. His life and supposed work was brought into comparison with

our Lord. Satan revealed his powers through him, and Simon himself claimed to be some great one. The people of Samaria had believed him. Philip, however, magnified Christ and His power and drew these people away from darkness to light. Even this leader himself believed and was baptized with the rest of the believers.

QUESTIONS.

What effect had the revival on that city?

Why were the Samaritans so ready to hear?

What did Philip the evangelist preach to the Samaritans?

Recite the story of Jesus' visit to Samaritans.

Why call them unclean spirits?

How had Simon deceived the Samaritans?

2. PHILIP'S CONVERTS RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Acts 8: 14-17.

(14) Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: (15) who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: (16) for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. (17) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

The Samaritans were not a race of strangers altogether, but they had Israelitish blood in them. They had claimed to possess the true law and temple. They were hated by the Jewish nation. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans (John 4:9). The Apostles at Jerusalem heard of the missionary work in Samaria, and sent two of the Apostles; Peter and John, to visit the church and do further missionary work. There was rivalry between the people of Samaria and Jerusalem. This could not be tolerated any longer by those who accepted Christ as their Savior. The Apostles, therefore, had an opportunity to confirm the work of Philip and also by their sanction break down any prejudice that

might still exist, and therefore unite the work done in the missionary field outside. It is quite certain that the church work was carried forward in harmony with the commission. Philip in his labors was directed by the Holy Spirit, given on the day of Pentecost, who was not to be confined to the Jews who accept Christ as their Savior, but was also for the Samaritans and the Gentiles, as we learn later. Three things are here implied, that the diffusion of the Gospel was to be by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jerusalem was not over Samaria, but Samaria was not independent of Jerusalem. (1) The Apostles were to be honored and recognized. (2) By the visit of these leading Apostles and confirming the miracles of the Holy Spirit, the new work was fully accredited as genuine. (3) These Samaritans had the gift of the Spirit at baptism, but not such as was imparted in His outer manifestations, and the time would come when the Apostle would not visit churches and people receive these manifestations by the laying on of hands. We are not to understand that the believers now do not come into possession by baptism of the Holy Spirit, but not by imposition of hands handed down by a succession of Apostles.

QUESTIONS.

Was not Samaria a good missionary field, and why leave it?
How many converts did Philip have in Samaria?
Who directed Philip in his missionary work?
Did Philip know when the Ethiopian would leave Jerusalem?
Where is Ethiopia?
What access had this man to temple worship?
What did the Holy Spirit say to the preacher?

3. THE WICKED PROPOSAL BY SIMON MAGUS.

Acts 8: 18-25.

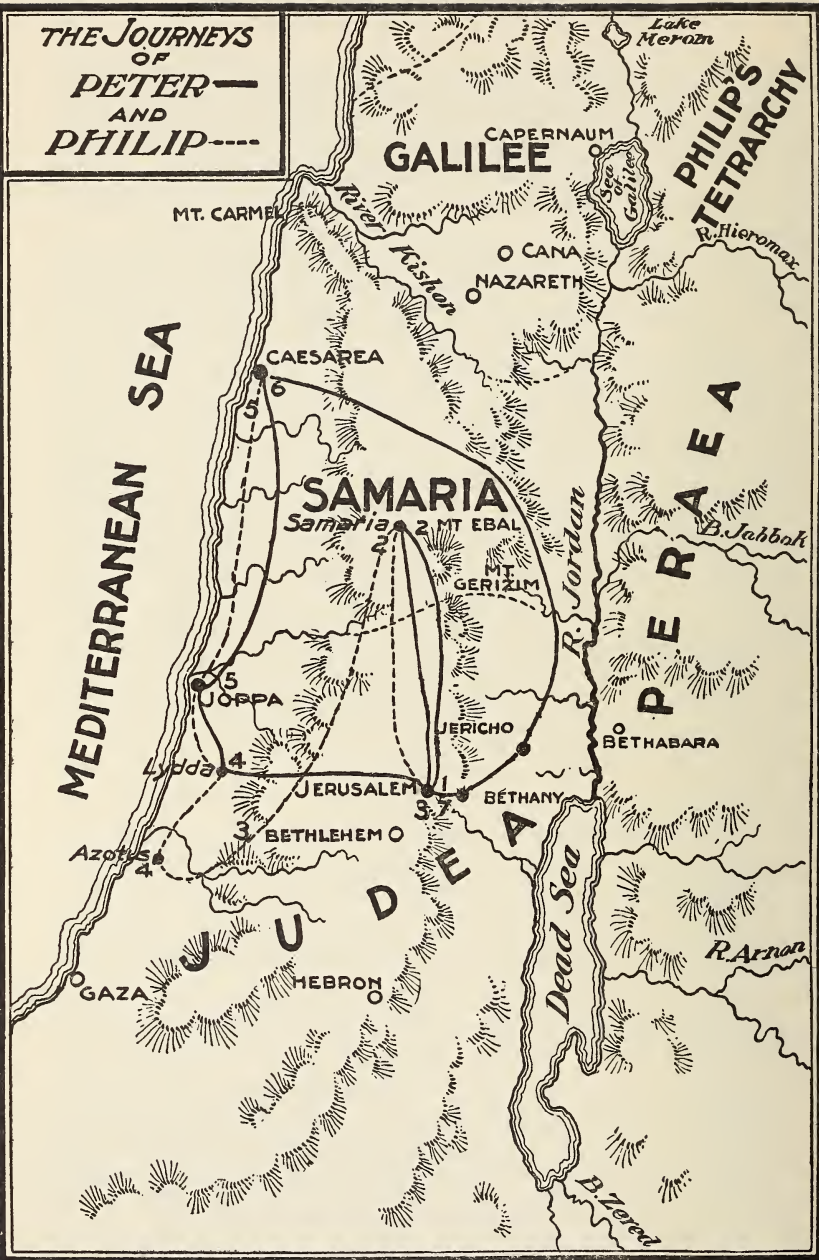
(18) Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, (19) saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. (20) But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. (21) Thou hast neither part

nor lot in this matter (Gr. word): for thy heart is not right before God. (22) Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. (23) For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. (24) And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me.

(25) They therefore, when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel (Gr. brought good tidings) to many villages of the Samaritans.

When the Apostles laid hands on the disciples that they might receive the Holy Spirit, this man Simon, who had been under the influence of Satan, now manifested what his water baptism was worth. The question he asked the Apostles showed his conception of belief and baptism. His whole desire was to get power and pay for it, and use it to make merchandise of that which is the gift of God, intending it for his own advancement and material success. The best things can not be bought with money. They must be received as gifts, and the Giver can not be deceived, because every individual motive and purpose is naked and open before Him. This gift was promised to be bestowed only upon those who would go forward as his servants to save a lost world. "Thy money perish with thee." The Holy Spirit gave to Peter these words to picture to this man the true condition of his heart. The applicants for baptism are generally expected to have repented, but this man was asked after baptism to repent of his wickedness, and pray God that the evil within his heart might be forgiven. He calls for others to intercede in his behalf, that the punishment spoken of by Peter might not be visited upon him. Peter and John did not return immediately to Jerusalem after their work in the churches of Samaria. They preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. We do not know just how long the Apostles were on this missionary tour, but it shows that the Apostles who remained in Jerusalem, while these were abroad preaching the Gospel, were deeply interested in the welfare of the church.

THE JOURNEYS
OF
PETER—
AND
PHILIP----



QUESTIONS.

What prompted Simon to make this proposal?

Why say, "Neither part nor lot"?

Give meaning of "Thy money perish with thee."

Peter not only positively rejects the money, but also with holy indignation and abhorrence devotes the silver and the man who offers it to destruction.

In whose sight was this man's heart not right?

State fully what Peter told him.

What request did he make of the disciples?

Can you tell by conduct if a man is a new creature?

4. THE ANGEL DIRECTS AND GUIDES PHILIP TO THE SINNER.

Acts 8: 26-31.

(26) But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. (27) And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship; (28) and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. (29) And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. (30) And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? (31) And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him.

Since the Gospel has come forth from Jerusalem, the leaders in the progress of the church are anxious for the opening of new missionary fields. They are not their own, but labor and are sent forth under the direction of Another. Philip held a great revival in Samaria. Many were brought into the church, but as the spirit of soul saving took hold of the hearts of the people, counting the number that were converted was not the main thing in the revival. One of the sad features of the present day evangelism, with its sensationalism, is the report, "How many converts have there been made?" This was no inspiration to Philip, to

have the number of his conversions in Samaria reported in the daily papers. An evangelist, with the success that Philip had in Samaria, would offer some excuses if invited to labor in the field into which Philip was directed by the Lord. Philip realized that he was a servant, and a servant must work in obedience to his Master. The Lord called, and he obeyed; he arose and went. If this were the attitude of the minister of the Gospel, success would follow him in revival work under all circumstances. The Lord did not forget him on the journey from Samaria to Gaza. The Lord also knew the traveler, who was dissatisfied with himself and searching for Light. The Lord knows where the sinner travels and can be found, and the obedient servant, listening to the Master's directions, will find the sinner. This inquirer was a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He was her treasurer. This man had looked to Jerusalem for light and blessing and been disappointed. He was returning still a seeker. As a eunuch, he was by the law an outcast and could not enter the congregation of Israel, but it did not bar him from the court of the Gentiles in which men of all nations, clean or unclean, were at liberty to worship. Both these persons, being under the direction of the Lord, would start from Samaria and Jerusalem, at the proper time, to meet in the desert. Philip at this time, directed by the Spirit, was told to join himself to the chariot. It took some effort, on the part of Philip, to get to this sinner, but he ran and met him, and found the sinner reading from Isa. 53: 7-8. Philip at once asked whether he understood the scripture he was reading. He was not a believer in Christ. Philip was invited into the chariot.

QUESTIONS.

Why was not the Holy Spirit imparted by Philip?

This is the first revival after the stoning of Stephen, and when the news reached the Apostles in Jerusalem they sent a committee (Peter and John) to confirm the work of Philip, the evangelist.

How and when had Philip received the Holy Spirit? 6:3-6.

Had the Apostles' hands been laid on Philip?

Why were the Apostles willing to confirm Philip's work among the Samaritans?

5. PHILIP'S SERMON TO THE INDIVIDUAL.

Acts 8:32-37.

(32) Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this, (Isa. 53:7 f) He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before his shearer is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth:

(33) In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: His generation who shall declare? For his life is taken from the earth.

(34) And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other?

(35) And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. (36) And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? (Some ancient authorities insert, wholly or in part, ver. 37, "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.")

The inquirer, after reading a few verses from the Scriptures, asked Philip if the prophet was speaking about himself or some other man. The preacher opened his mouth and told the sinner that it was Christ the Savior that the prophet was speaking of. As the preacher continued to magnify Jesus, the eunuch began to see into the scripture and, realizing his own sinful condition, said to the preacher, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip was preaching Jesus, just what the sinner then needed, and just what the sinners now need.

QUESTIONS.

What scripture was the sinner reading?

If a sinner were reading the same scripture now, what would you tell him?

Why could not the sinner understand this scripture?

Did the people understand it in Isaiah's time?

6. THE SINNER REPENTS AND IS BAPTIZED.**Acts 8: 38-40.**

(38) And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. (39) And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing. (40) But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.

After the eunuch suggested baptism, Philip said to him, if he believed with all his heart his wishes could be complied with. He believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and that He died to save sinners. The chariot stopped and Philip and the sinner went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. After baptism, when they were coming from the water, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away from the Ethiopian, as suddenly as he was brought to him. Philip ran to overtake the eunuch, and so his leaving may have been just as sudden. The Spirit, no doubt, wanted the Ethiopian to go forward into new fields and tell the story, and Philip to work along the coast of the Mediterranean. It was God's will that this man should go on his way to his native land, and build up this saving faith. This man went on his way rejoicing. This is the only sentence the Spirit records concerning the condition of this man. "He was rejoicing." This is the experience of every man who is looking for the Light and you help him to find it.

QUESTIONS.

Upon what condition was Philip willing to baptize him?

Give the convert's answer.

Who went down into the water?

Who was called away by the Spirit?

Where was Philip preaching after this?

Where is Azotus?

What is said about the sinner after baptism?

Section II. Conversion of Saul and the First Missionary Work. Acts 9: 1-30.

1. CONVERSION OF SAUL.

Acts 9: 1-9.

(1) But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, (2) and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. (3) And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: (4) and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? (5) And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: (6) but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. (7) And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice (or, sound), but beholding no man. (8) And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. (9) And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

As the missionary work is going forward and reaching the hearts of people, as it has through the preaching of Philip to the eunuch and others, the church is growing in her work of soul saving. The opposers of the church were not satisfied to confine their cruel opposition in the city of Jerusalem. Saul has been a successful persecutor in the city, but at this time the church was going forth to do aggressive work, and the Lord did not allow Satan, through Saul, to lay his hands any further on the efforts of His disciples, in spreading the Gospel outside of Jerusalem. Saul received letters from the Jewish authorities to go to Damascus to the synagogue, and any men and women found there, followers of the Lord Jesus, to bring as prisoners to Jerusalem. This young Pharisee had a strong belief in the God of Israel, in His promises concerning the destiny of Israel. He was born in Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia. His bringing up was on the strictest Jewish order. All the observances of the law and the tradition of the Elders were conscientiously fol-

lowed by him. Saul, however, received his religious education in Jerusalem. He was under the instruction of the great teacher, Gamaliel.

Saul, with his letter to bring the Christians from Damascus, started on his journey. Saul was as blind as his nation. He was indeed an enemy, and a great enemy. Surely only the grace of God could save such a man, and so the grace of God only can save such a nation of whom he is a type. The impression made upon Saul, who stood by when Stephen was stoned, saw him kneeling and offering the prayer, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," was not forgotten. It must have been the starting point of his conversion, and on the way to Damascus the heavens were opened once more. This great sinner, who had not only hated the name of Jesus, but had assisted in putting to death those who did believe on Him, could now, by his own vision, see in part what Stephen saw and hear the words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" in harmony with his actions. Whenever Saul, by word or deed, did anything against a disciple of Jesus, it was Jesus who was persecuted.

Saul and his companions were struck down by the light. Those who journeyed with him stood speechless after the Lord spoke with him. They had fallen to the ground, but now arose and were speechless. The voice called Saul by name. While the text indicates that his eyes were opened, yet he could not see as before; his companions took him by the hand and led him into Damascus.

QUESTIONS.

What was said about Saul before?

How far was Damascus from Jerusalem?

Damascus, one of the oldest cities in the world, was about 140 miles northeast of Jerusalem.

Why bring Christians bound to Jerusalem?

To be tried by the Sanhedrim and punished as that body might decree.

Where was Saul born, and give his two names?

He was born at Tarsus. Saul was his Hebrew name and Paul his Greek name.

2. ANANIAS BAPTIZES SAUL.

Acts 9: 10-18.

(10) Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. (11) And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; (12) and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight. (13) But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem: (14) and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name. (15) But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel (Gr. vessel of election) unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: (16) for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake. (17) And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. (18) And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized.

Being left three days without sight, gave this great persecutor an opportunity to test his religion. At this period the unbelieving Jews, surrounding him, may have tried to comfort him, but could not. The Lord again had His messenger in Damascus to instruct Saul what to do. Ananias was told the exact place where he was and what Saul was doing, and that He had opened to him in a vision how he was to receive his sight. Ananias, knowing the history of this wicked man, and how much evil he had done in Jerusalem, and having been informed that he had authority from the chief priests, hesitated to accept the message. But the Lord told him what Saul was to be in the future, and what his relationship would be to the Gentiles, and what sufferings would come upon him in representing Him. Ananias went forth to carry out the instruction of the Lord. He spoke to him with the endearing name, "Brother Saul,"

and put his hands upon Saul and informed him that the same Jesus, who had appeared to him on the way, had sent Ananias that he might have his eyes opened and receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Immediately the scales fell from his eyes and he arose and was baptized. He was now a chosen vessel, a light to the Gentiles and one who entered into the representative sufferings of Jesus as His messenger.

QUESTIONS.

How did Ananias know what to do?

Who was Ananias?

His name is given here in connection with Saul's conversion, but nothing more is known about him.

Give name and location of street.

Who provided a teacher for Saul?

Where did Saul receive his authority to bind Christians?

Explain the figure of a "chosen vessel."

The Lord had called him for a definite work and he became a vessel to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles.

What is said about Saul's suffering for the future?

Give full account of what took place at Damascus.

3. SAUL PREACHES JESUS IN DAMASCUS.

Acts 9: 19-22.

(19) And he took food and was strengthened.

And he was certain days with the disciples that were at Damascus. (20) And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God. (21) And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havoc of them that called on this name? and he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests. (22) But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ.

When Paul was received into the visible church by the rite of baptism, administered by Ananias, he received meat and his body was refreshed, because he had fasted three days and three nights. Immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood, but straightway entered upon preaching

Christ in the synagogues, showing forth that He is the Son of God. How strange it must have appeared to the disciples in Damascus to have this one, who came to bind them and take them to Jerusalem as prisoners, because they believed in Jesus, now declaring that salvation could be had only through this same Jesus whom he had persecuted. The first effect that Saul's preaching had after his conversion was that all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havoc of them that called on this name," preaching the faith which he once destroyed? The Apostle had seen the risen Christ and heard Him speak on the way to Damascus. Is it any wonder that he increased in strength and confounded the Jews, and by their seeing and hearing Him was able to prove to them that the One he preached was the risen Savior?

QUESTIONS.

How long was Saul fasting and without sight?

What did Saul do immediately after his conversion?

What effect had his preaching on the people who listened to him?

Describe Saul's experience on his way to Damascus.

What was the testimony of those who journeyed with Saul to Damascus?

4. SAUL, THE PREACHER, SAVED AT DAMASCUS.

Acts 9: 23-25.

(23) And when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel together to kill him: (24) but their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates also day and night that they might kill him: (25) but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

How long Saul preached at Damascus immediately, we have no means of ascertaining. We learn from Gal. 1:17 that, shortly after his conversion, after his preaching in the synagogue, he proceeded to Arabia and may have remained there for some considerable time. We do not know

of his definite employment, but we consider it highly probable that he received, during this period of his retirement in the country of Arabia, fuller instructions in the work that God had for him to do. It was a period in which Saul was emptying his heart of all that was not helpful in carrying forward the work, and allowing God to fill him as the chosen vessel with soul messages as an Apostle of the Gentiles. We know he did not receive his apostleship by appointment from the other Apostles, but by direct revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12). At the completion of his sojourn in Arabia, he returned to Damascus, where he continued his preaching. "And after many days were fulfilled": this phrase denotes a length of time. Between verses 22 and 23 came the three years' sojourn in Arabia (Gal. 1:17-18). Saul at this time, in Damascus, confronted the same difficulty in preaching Christ that he, by his own influence and power, had set before others. When he learned of their plot, he hid himself. The city of Damascus was at this time in possession of Aretas, king of Arabia (2 Cor. 11:32). And the governor, influenced by the Jews, kept a watch day and night at the gates, so that he might not escape. Some of the houses in this town were built against the wall, and with upper stories of wood resting on top of the wall, it would be easy for his disciples to let him down in a basket by night and assist him to escape.

QUESTIONS.

How long a time is given between 22nd and 23rd verses?

It was about three years after his conversion that he made his escape from Damascus in a basket. Sometime during these three years he had made his tour through Arabia and returned to Damascus.

Who was king of Arabia, and what assistance did the governor give the Jews?

How did the disciples assist Saul in his escape?

5. SAUL VISITS CHURCH AT JERUSALEM.

Acts 9: 26-30.

(26) And when he was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. (27) But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. (28) And he was with them going in and going out at Jerusalem, (29) preaching boldly in the name of the Lord: and he spake and disputed against the Grecian Jews (Gr. Hellenists); but they were seeking to kill him. (30) And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

This first visit to Jerusalem was three years after his conversion. Upon his arrival in Jerusalem, he at once proceeded to associate with the Christians, but they were afraid of him, and many of them believed him to be a spy. Why he did not return at once, is not stated, but he was under the leadership of Him whom he was to preach. He did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did he go up to Jerusalem to confer with them who were Apostles. His apostleship was not to be received from man, but by direct revelation. The twelve in Jerusalem had nothing to do with his becoming an Apostle. Even when he arrived in Jerusalem, three years after his conversion, the twelve would have nothing to do with him, except Barnabas, who declared to the church that Saul had seen the Lord; that he beheld His glory on the way to Damascus, and had already proved his genuineness by publicly declaring Him as the Messiah. His stay in Jerusalem was but fifteen days, and it seems from the text that his special purpose was to have conference with Peter. He was appointed an Apostle to the Gentiles. This was his special mission, and no doubt the purpose of his conference with Peter.

While he tarried in Jerusalem, he boldly proclaimed the change he had undergone by speaking fearlessly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by disputing against the Gre-

cians, who probably were some of his associates at the time of the stoning of Stephen. The loss of such a man to the Jewish faith was very discouraging, and they resented his spirit and courage by plotting against him and seeking to slay him.

When the brethren knew, when his friends became aware, that these unbelieving Jews were trying to do with Saul what he had inspired his associates before his conversion to do with Stephen, they deemed it prudent to send him away from Jerusalem. Saul himself, however, gave a different reason (22:17). God revealed to him, while at prayer in the temple, that another sphere of work was awaiting him, and this outward manifestation of persecution was intended to get him to move forward and occupy his appointed field. Leaving Jerusalem, they brought him to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus, his own native city, where he remained until summoned by Barnabas to assist in the church at Antioch.

QUESTIONS.

Who were Saul's associates when he left Jerusalem as a persecutor?

Why was the church at Jerusalem so ignorant of his conversion?

How long was he absent from Jerusalem?

Where did Barnabas get his information?

Saul and Barnabas were both foreign-born Jews. Saul knew of his generosity, and sought him out as the one most likely to give him a candid hearing. When Barnabas was once convinced, it became an easy matter to convince the Apostles.

What Apostle did Saul see?

How long was he at Jerusalem at this time? Gal. 1:18.

How did Saul get away from the enemy?

Who told him to leave and go to Tarsus? 22:17-21.

Tarsus was his birthplace and home. He disappears at this point from the pages of Luke, but does not retire from activity (Gal. 1:21-24). It is possible that during the time of his silence in the record there may have occurred what is related in 2 Cor. 11—the receiving of stripes and shipwrecks during his service for the Master.

Section III. Preparation of Church for Admission of Gentiles. Acts 9: 31-11: 18.

1. PEACE AND PROSPERITY OF CHURCH.

Acts 9: 31.

(31) So the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified (Gr. builded up); and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied.

“Then had the churches rest.” Saul, the great persecutor, had been converted; and while we have some disturbance at Damascus, and also at Jerusalem on the return of Saul, now that he has gone into a new field of labor, opposition seems to be withdrawn and peace restored. The church was being built up in faith and piety, increase in spiritual power and a very rapid increase in numbers. By the term, “church,” we mean all the followers of Jesus in the different fields where missionary stations are established and disciples are congregated for worship.

QUESTIONS.

Name provinces in which churches have been established.
What had Gamaliel said about the church? 5: 34-39.

His statement as to divine origin was now vindicated.

Does the church prosper more in time of peace or persecution, and why?

2. PETER'S MIRACLE AT LYDDA.

Acts 9: 32-35.

(32) And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda. (33) And there he found a certain man named Æneas, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. (34) And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. (35) And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

The preaching of the Gospel hitherto had been exclusively to the Jews, or to the Jewish proselytes. Even the Apostles did not seem to have understood Christ's command in the great commission, "Go teach all nations," to include the Gentiles as members of the Christian church. While Saul was a chosen vessel, and the Apostle of the Gentiles, at the present stage of the church the door had not yet been opened to any Gentile converts. The Apostles being constantly under the influence of Judaism, having Jerusalem as a center, it was difficult for them to get the larger vision that God gave His Son, to die as the Savior of the world. To lead, even the Christian leaders, out of this narrow conception of salvation, that is, that salvation was intended for the Jews alone, He took matters into His own hands and left the church no choice but to obey His commandments. To open the way for this larger teaching, the Apostle Peter went on a tour among the churches. He visited Lydda, and there found a man who had been sick for eight years with palsy. He restored this man to his health, and when they found what the religion could do to a man like Æneas, giving him health of body and soul, many in that place were converted and turned to the Lord. These churches that Peter was visiting, founded by the dispersed disciples, had also suffered from persecution, and now enjoying peace could be used with advantage to the Apostles. The cure of this man had much the same influence when healed, as the lame man that lay at the Beautiful Gate. This disease was incurable, and the people knew that it was the power of God that healed him. Lydda was about thirty miles from Jerusalem.

QUESTIONS.

The church at this time was made up of what class of people?

Quote the commission, and state what it meant to the church at this time and how it is interpreted by the church at the present time.

Where was Peter preaching?

How long was Æneas sick? and what was the nature of his disease?

Why say, "Arise, and make thy bed"?

So that all may know that he was thoroughly cured.

What was the result of this miracle?

3. PETER'S MIRACLE AT JOPPA.

Acts 9: 36-43.

(36) Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas (Gazelle): this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. (37) And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. (38) And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us. (39) And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. (40) But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. (41) And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. (42) And it became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord. (43) And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

Joppa was a seaport of Jerusalem, about thirty-five miles distant. Lydda, where Peter had been preaching, was about twelve miles out from Joppa. At Joppa was a Christian church, and the place where we find the earliest trace of the organization of widows so fully described by the Apostle Paul in his letters to his spiritual son Timothy. One of these widows, called Tabitha, had distinguished herself by her "good works and almsdeeds which she did." This woman took sick and died, and the disciples, knowing that Peter was at Lydda, sent two men requesting him to come to them at once. The disciples did not state the purpose for which they wanted Peter's presence; whether to

minister comfort to the distressed band of believers, or to raise Tabitha to life. Immediately upon his arrival, they brought him into the upper chamber, "and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas had made, while she was with them." Peter, putting them all forth, kneeled down and prayed, and turning to the body, said, "Tabitha, arise." She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, sat up. Peter presented her alive to the widows and the disciples. Peter's work in this church had a great influence over the believers, and resulted in a great revival. What a memorial this was for one who had given herself to providing for the poor! "Blessed are they who die in the Lord." The Apostle Peter, as he listened to the pleadings of the associate widows, could not help remembering the times when he stood by his own Master, when He raised to life the widow's son, the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus the brother of Mary and Martha; but his Master was in heaven, yet he had faith that he could represent Him at this time by bringing back to life the one who was His true and faithful servant while on earth. No wonder that this became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter continued to reside in Joppa for a considerable time, and had his home with one Simon a tanner, whose house was located close by the seaside.

QUESTIONS.

How far was it from Jerusalem to Joppa?

How far from Lydda to Joppa?

What were the two names given to this woman?

Tabitha, the Aramaic or Hebrew, and Dorcas, the Greek.

Why did they send for Peter?

Why did the poor widows weep?

Who had first preached here and started this church? 8:40.

Give a full description of how Dorcas was restored to life.

Why did Peter tarry so long at Joppa?

Here was a great harvest field from which to gather souls, and the reapers were few.

4. CORNELIUS' VISION.

Acts 10: 1-8.

(1) Now there was a certain man in Cæsarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band (or, cohort) called the Italian band, (2) a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. (3) He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Cornelius. (4) And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God. (5) And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: (6) he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side. (7) And when the angel that spake unto him was departed, he called two of his household-servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; (8) and having rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

About seventy miles from Jerusalem, northwest, is Cæsarea, the political capital of Judea, where the Roman governor presided, and which became the headquarters of the Roman soldiers. It was known as the great Gentile city of Palestine. In this period of study, we are in the transition from Jewish to Gentile Christianity, and it was natural that the Gentile center should be established outside of Jerusalem. Cornelius, the centurion, who had charge of a hundred soldiers, was a man of deep piety, and instructed his household in religion. He had forsaken all idols and worshiped the true and living God. He was a man of prayer, and did good to all men as he had opportunity. While engaged in prayer, about three o'clock in the afternoon, an angel of God came and spoke to him. Cornelius was afraid, and said, "What is it, Lord?" And the Lord assured him that his prayers and his good deeds were before God as a memorial. He asked Cornelius to send men to Joppa to Peter, who was at the home of one Simon a tanner, because he would be able to tell what he should do. After the angel departed, he called two of his household servants and a devout soldier, and after giving them proper instruction, sent them to Joppa.

QUESTIONS.

How far is Cæsarea from Jerusalem?

The Roman capital of Judea situated on the Mediterranean Sea, thirty miles north of Joppa and about seventy miles northwest of Jerusalem.

What the mission of Cornelius?

To what nation did he belong?

He was a Gentile, a Roman officer of some rank, and captain of 100 men. He belonged to the band called Italian, probably because the soldiers were true born, and not native troops of Palestine.

What did the Lord say about the prayer and alms?

Why say lodged with one Simon a tanner?

That the servants might not have trouble to find him. The tanner's house was considered ceremonially unclean. A Jew of Peter's temper, who could lodge with a tanner, could certainly be approached and might go tomorrow and convert a Gentile.

5. PETER'S VISION.

Acts 10: 9-16.

(9) Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour: (10) and he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance; (11) and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: (12) wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven. (13) And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. (14) But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. (15) And a voice came unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. (16) And this was done thrice: and straightway the vessel was received up into heaven.

The three men sent had a common interest with their superior and must plead their own in pleading his. About noon the following day, as the messengers drew nigh to Joppa, Peter, unconscious of the coming of the messengers, went up on the housetop to pray. While there, he became

very hungry. Before the usual meal was ready he fell into a trance. Having gone forth to different churches in the interest of soul saving and, no doubt, coming in contact with many of this class of people, how could it be otherwise than that this very Gentile question was pressing itself upon his heart? In this state, he saw Heaven opened and a great sheet let down, supported by four corners. This sheet contained all kinds of fourfooted beasts, creeping things, and



fowls. He heard a voice say to him, "Kill and eat." Peter plead an excuse in harmony with the teaching of the Jewish law, which forbade the eating of anything "common or unclean." The very question to be settled was a social one. Soon he and Cornelius were to be in the same home and sit at the same table. The voice came and told him that what God has cleansed no one has a right to call "common or unclean." Peter saw and heard three times. The voice was unmistakable. At this very time, when Peter was trying

to solve what the vision really meant, the messengers from Cornelius had arrived at the tanner's house and were inquiring for him.

QUESTIONS.

What did Peter do while messengers were on their way to Joppa?

What had Peter been doing so long at Joppa?

What was Peter doing at the time he received this vision?

What was the purpose of the vision?

What effect had the vision on Peter?

How many times was this special message given to Peter?

6. PETER'S JOURNEY TO CORNELIUS.

Acts 10: 17-23.

(17) Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself what the vision which he had seen might mean, behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood before the gate, (18) and called and asked whether Simon, who was surnamed Peter, were lodging there. (19) And while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. (20) But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting: for I have sent them. (21) And Peter went down to the men, and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? (22) And they said, Cornelius a centurion, a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words from thee. (23) So he called them in and lodged them.

And on the morrow he arose and went forth with them, and certain of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

The messengers inquired whether that was the place where Peter lodged. While Peter is still in doubt as to the meaning of the vision, the Spirit informed him that messengers were seeking for him, and further instructed him that he was at once to go down and accompany these messengers and not have any further doubt as to the mission, because these messengers were there at the Spirit's direction. The messengers and Peter met; Peter asked them the

purpose of their coming, and they plead the cause of their master, telling Peter that he was a centurion, one who feared God, and had a good report among all the nation of the Jews, and that a Holy Angel directed him "to send us to you that you might come into his house and speak the words of life." While Peter did not fully comprehend, he was left no choice, he must go. God was leading him. He could not start as it was too late in the day, so he took these messengers, Gentiles, and lodged them. Did they eat at the same table? This is an interesting question to those who know how scrupulous the Jerusalem Jews were about the violation of the law and tradition. The following day they set out on their journey to Cæsarea. A matter of such great importance as the bringing in of the Gentiles into the church, Peter would not undertake by himself; therefore, he asks six brethren from Joppa to accompany him.

QUESTIONS.

Who helped Peter to know the meaning of the vision?

What did the Spirit say to Peter at this time?

Who had sent the messengers that were just then at the gate?

What did he ask the messengers?

Give the reply the messengers made to Peter.

7. PETER AND CORNELIUS MEET.

Acts 10: 24-33.

(24) And on the morrow they entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his kinsmen and his near friends. (25) And when it came to pass that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped (the Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature or to the Creator) him. (26) But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. (27) And as he talked with him, he went in, and findeth many come together: (28) and he said unto them, Ye yourselves know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of

another nation; and yet unto me hath God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean: (29) wherefore also I came without gainsaying, when I was sent for. I ask therefore with what intent ye sent for me. (30) And Cornelius said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, (31) and saith, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. (32) Send therefore to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner, by the sea side. (33) Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord.

The messengers arrived, with Peter and his six associates, in Cæsarea the next afternoon at about three o'clock. Cornelius, the man having this vision, and spoken to by the angel, who would know just when to assemble his kinsmen and near friends, who had so thoroughly been prepared for the messenger of Truth, met Peter on his arrival and fell down and worshiped him. Peter refused all Divine honor, and, after having a private conversation, they went into the house where many were gathered together. Peter now addressed the company and told them that, under ordinary circumstances, it was unlawful for a Jew to associate with a person of another nation; but by special revelation, before coming here, he had been told by the Spirit to hold no man "common or unclean." "Because of this revelation, we raised no objections when we were invited to come here, and now would like to know what was the purpose you had in sending for us." Cornelius related what had happened four days before, when he was fasting and praying, at the hour of prayer: "A man appeared before me in bright apparel telling me that my prayers and alms are as a memorial before God. The messenger instructed me to send for you at Joppa, saying that you would come and speak unto us. I immediately sent for you, and you are now here. We are here together, before God, to hear you speak the things that God commands you."

QUESTIONS.

Where did the messengers spend the night?

How did Cornelius know that Peter would come?

Was Peter surprised to find the congregation ready to hear him?

What did Peter say when he first met Cornelius?

How long before this had the angel appeared to Cornelius?

Why speak of Simon lodging at the house of Simon a tanner?

Whom did they expect to hear when they listened to Peter?

8. PETER'S SERMON.—Acts 10: 34-43.

(1) The Introduction.—Acts 10: 34-35.

(34) And Peter opened his mouth, and said,

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:
(35) but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.

“Many were gathered together.” This was the Gentile Pentecost, and perhaps more people were affected by the baptism of the Holy Spirit than in the upper room of the Jewish Pentecost. Peter began by encouraging the people; he had not gotten away from the vision in which he learned that God is no Respector of persons. The way to Him is open for any individual, no matter to what nation he belongs. If he meets the condition stated by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, he becomes heir and is accepted as an adopted child.

QUESTIONS.

What class of people make up this congregation?

Do we know how many people were present at Pentecost of Gentiles?

Give the number who were present at the Pentecost of the Jews.

How did Peter know that salvation was for all nations?

Upon what condition will God accept everybody?

(2) Brief History of Jesus.—Acts 10: 36-43.

(36) The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings (or, the Gospel) of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)—(37) that saying ye yourselves know, which was

published throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; (38) even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. (39) And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. (40) Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, (41) not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. (42) And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. (43) To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

The sermon was simple and straightforward. Christ's mission in the world was to bring peace. He was the Anointed One of God, giving Him the Holy Spirit and power. His mission was to do good and deliver people out of trouble, who were under the influence of disease. The Apostles themselves were witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus—Peter declared that the Jews crucified Him and God raised Him from the dead—and of this fact the Apostles were chosen to bear witness and were commanded to preach Him unto all people. It is this Man Jesus, who was ordained by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. Even the prophets bore witness of Him, and declared that everyone who would believe in this risen Christ would receive remission of sin. Peter had already, in the very introduction of his sermon, said to this congregation: "He is Lord of all. He belongs not to the Jews only, but is the Savior of all who believe in Him."

QUESTIONS.

What were the good tidings that he preached?

When was Jesus anointed and who anointed Him?

What was the real mission of Jesus?

"He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil."

Of what were the early disciples witnesses?

Why call attention to the prophets as witnesses?

9. GENTILES RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Acts 10: 44-48.

(44) While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. (45) And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. (46) For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, (47) Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? (48) And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

While Peter was preaching to this Gentile congregation the things that were commanded him of God, scarcely had he commenced His address, when God again interfered and poured down the Holy Ghost on all who heard the Word, thus confirming the vision that Peter had, that the middle wall of partition must be broken down and that Jesus Christ died on the cross to present man as one brotherhood before God. The brethren, who accompanied Peter, were greatly astonished because the Gentiles had come into possession of the same power. They knew they had the same power because they heard them speak with new tongues and magnify God. Peter realized that since these people had received the baptism of the Spirit, therefore the outward sign of baptism could not be withheld from those who had received what that sign simply represents and seals. Peter at once gave orders for immediate baptism. In this entire bringing in of the Gentiles into the church and the establishment of a Gentile Pentecost, man was a mere passive instrument in carrying out the plans of God. These plans and purposes were so distinctly unfolded, step by step, that it was impossible for Peter to hesitate or doubt from the beginning to the conclusion of these circumstances.

QUESTIONS.

What was the source of the message delivered by Peter to this congregation?

Give the principal points of the message.

Who received the Holy Spirit?

What is meant by speaking with tongues?

This is the Pentecost of the Gentiles. It showed that the Gentiles were included in the plan of salvation, and the Holy Spirit was for them as well as for the Jews.

Why was the Holy Spirit given before baptism?

To prove that God treated Jews and Gentiles alike, and that circumcision should not stand in the way of being admitted into the church.

Why did they invite him to tarry there certain days?

10. BROADENING OF THE JERUSALEM CHURCH.

Acts 11: 1-18.

(1) Peter Called to Account for His Conduct.—Acts 11: 1-3.

(1) Now the apostles and the brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. (2) And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, (3) saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

Peter said to the six brethren, when the Holy Spirit had been given to the Gentiles, "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized?" This challenge was not to the Gentiles, but to the six brethren who were with him on this important mission as he said, "who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we." He then gave orders to these brethren to baptize the converts who had asked for admission into the church. The circumcised Jewish disciples at Jerusalem learned that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God. This, no doubt, they learned during the period that Peter tarried in a continual revival effort at Cæsarea, giving further instructions about the Lord Jesus concerning His life, miracles, death, and resurrection. What real fellowship there must have been when the middle wall, or partition, had been broken down, and the believing Jews and Gentiles were one in Christ Jesus. It did not create the same joy in Jerusalem over what had been

done, and contention arose, and there was great danger of division. We have learned that two classes of Jews were in the church in Jerusalem—those who were radically Jewish in spirit, and Hellenists who were more liberal in their views. He was called to Jerusalem to make his defense.

QUESTIONS.

By Peter's preaching, what had the Gentiles received at Cæsarea?

What did the Jews believe was the complaint against Peter?

What part had the six brethren in admitting the Gentiles into the church?

What was the real charge against Peter?

That he went in unto men uncircumcised. That he ate with them. They did not complain of the instructions given, or of receiving baptism, but of violation of ceremonial rules, based not on Divine Law, but on human traditions.

(2) Peter's Vindication.—Acts 11:4-18.

(4) But Peter began, and expounded the matter unto them in order, saying, (5) I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even unto me: (6) upon which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw the fourfooted beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and birds of the heaven. (7) And I heard also a voice saying unto me, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. (8) But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth. (9) But a voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. (10) And this was done thrice: and all were drawn up again into heaven. (11) And behold, forthwith three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent from Cæsarea unto me. (12) And the Spirit bade me go with them, making no distinction. And these six brethren also accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house: (13) and he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; (14) who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house. (15) And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. (16) And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized

in (or, with) the Holy Spirit. (17) If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God? (18) And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.

Peter gave a full account in the order of God's leading in the bringing in of the Gentiles. In order that they might understand the revelation received by Peter, he rehearsed to the Apostles and brethren at Jerusalem, God's dealings with him on the entire mission tour. To satisfy the objection made by the brethren at Jerusalem, Peter gave them to understand that his own view coincided with theirs, until God in so unmistakable a way had shown His own leadings in the entire affair. One day about noon, Peter was praying at Joppa, and in a vision saw a sheet let down from heaven, held by four corners, containing all manner of beasts, creeping things, and fowls; at the same time he heard a voice say, "Peter, slay and eat." This he wanted to refuse, because it was contrary to his religious teachings. But the voice spake again saying, "What God has cleansed, call thou not common." This was repeated three times. "While I thought what the vision meant, three men were already at the house, asking to see me. Cornelius, a devout man, was visited by an angel, who directed him to send these three men that I might come and speak to them the words of Life, that the house of Cornelius might be saved. When the six brethren and I arrived, and I began to speak to the Gentiles, the Holy Spirit came upon them as it did on us at Pentecost. At once the words of the Master came to me: 'John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost,' showing to me that this gift was not confined to the Jews." The baptism to be preached by the Apostles was to be world-wide. Peter now made his appeal to the Apostles and brethren at Jerusalem, "If God did make the Gentiles equal with the Jews in favor, then by refusing their acceptance, I would have disobeyed the com-

mand of God.” This argument silenced the opponents in the church at Jerusalem, and brought joy to the Apostles and brethren, after they learned that God led Peter, through revelation, to open the door.

QUESTIONS.

Give matter Peter relates in order from beginning.

What purpose had Peter in giving so full an account to the Apostles and brethren?

The events here rehearsed by Peter had removed his own prejudice, and it was thought by him that it should have the same effect upon the church.

In what way did the six brethren present help the matter?

As proper persons to confirm the truth stated by Peter.

Why say received like gift?

What was the result of Peter’s account and apology?

There was peace in the church, and God the Father of all was glorified.

Section IV. Development of New Religious Center. Acts 11: 19-30.

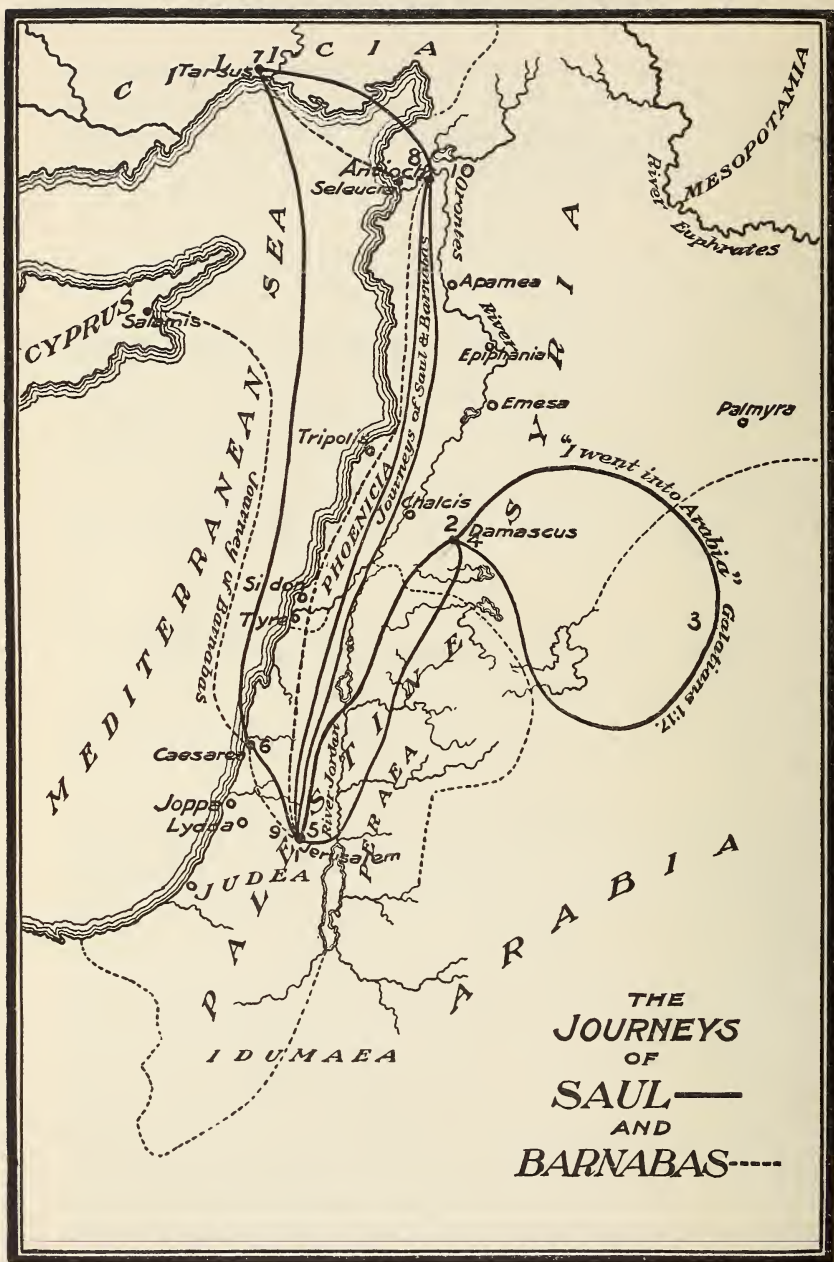
1. THE FIRST GENTILE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH.

Acts 11: 19-21.

(19) They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews.

(20) But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks (many ancient authorities read “Grecian Jews”; see ch. 6:1) also, preaching the Lord Jesus. (21) And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord.

Luke had given an account of the conversion of Saul, the missionary journey by the Apostle Peter, and the baptism of the Gentiles by the Holy Spirit. He now takes up the narrative following the persecution that arose about Stephen. It is an account of the founding of the church at Antioch. We have learned what some did when they were driven out of Jerusalem. In these verses we learn what



others did, and where the Gospel was proclaimed. It was very difficult to establish in a place like Jerusalem, where the influence was so strongly Jewish. Some of those who were scattered by persecution traveled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, confining their preaching to the Jews. The Holy Spirit spreads the truth, but He uses men who are not prejudiced and whose hearts are open for the reception of truth. These men from Cyprus and Cyrene, having been foreign-born, and having these larger ideals, spoke to the Greeks who were at Antioch about the Lord Jesus. These men were guided by the Spirit, and preached Jesus, which resulted in a great revival. These Greeks, we are told, turned unto the Lord. Antioch became prominent as the other great center of Christianity.

QUESTIONS.

What caused the scattering of church members?

Name and locate places where the Word was preached.

Where were the preachers from, and what made them willing to preach the Lord to the Greeks?

Who were the Greeks?

That new departure here noted is that they preached to the Greeks who were not Jews.

Why say the hand of the Lord was with them?

What was the result of this preaching?

What place now became the religious center for aggressive church work?

2. AID AND ENCOURAGEMENT FROM MOTHER CHURCH.

Acts 11:22-24.

(22) And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch: (23) who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord: (24) for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

News reached Jerusalem of the great revival then in progress at Antioch. The mother church at Jerusalem, feeling it her duty to assist in the work at Antioch, sent Barnabas to watch over and give whatever advice might be essential to the progress of the church. This also was proper, that a blessed relationship might be had between the assembly in Jerusalem and the one at Antioch. When Barnabas came to Antioch and saw what favor God had bestowed on these people, he was glad, and gave the work his hearty endorsement, exhorting all to continue with true purpose of heart, and cleave unto the Lord. These Gentile Christians were the Lord's. Barnabas advised them because of their relation to Him to look to Him for all their strength and blessings. Barnabas was the right kind of man to send to Antioch. He was foreign-born, had no narrow prejudices, and was able to sympathize with any advance in Christian work. He did more than simply encourage the work. He was a man full of faith and power, having the Holy Spirit as his Leader, and was a very valuable worker in the further development of this church. Here was a continuous revival and many people were added to the Lord.

"Preachers should expect God to save some one every time they preach. Spurgeon never preached a sermon that did not have in it the way of life, and this is the secret of his great success."

QUESTIONS.

What news came to the Jerusalem church?

Why did they send Barnabas?

What was his exhortation to the church?

What is said as to his character?

(1) He was a good man, not merely honest and upright, but generous, kindly, and loving; (2) full of the Holy Spirit—he lived in the Spirit; (3) and of faith—he preached what he heartily believed.

What was the result of his work?

3. BARNABAS BRINGS SAUL TO ANTIOCH.

Acts 11: 25-26.

(25) And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul; (26) and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with (Gr. in) the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Antioch had become a great religious center. New converts were being added to the church daily, and religious instruction should be given in order to produce proper training for the followers of Christ. To do this, additional help was needed. Barnabas knew of a man that just suited the conditions of this Antioch church. He went to Tarsus and brought Saul, who could not remain in Jerusalem as an Apostle of the Gentiles, but here a religious center had been established just in keeping with his appointment. Here these two spiritual men labored together for a whole year, and gave instruction to many people, and here for the first time the followers of Christ received the new name, "Christian."

QUESTIONS.

Why go to Tarsus after Saul?

The many converts in the church needed religious instruction, and there was an immense field for harvest.

What was Saul doing at Tarsus?

Saul was no doubt preaching at Cilicia and busy about his Master's work, yet greater opportunities were pointed out to him by Barnabas.

What had Barnabas done for Saul at Jerusalem after his conversion?

How long did they work together?

The young converts just delivered from heathenism had special need of instruction.

Why called Christians?

It was the family name of the followers of Christ—all bound together in one. The result of Saul's and Barnabas' instruction for a year in this church brought about this new name.

4. BARNABAS AND SAUL SENT TO JERUSALEM.

Acts 11: 27-30.

(27) Now in these days there came down prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. (28) And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world (Gr. the inhabited earth): which came to pass in the days of Claudius. (29) And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief (Gr. for ministry) unto the brethren that dwelt in Judæa: (30) which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

The fellowship between the Jerusalem church and Antioch was not forgotten. Prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch, one of whom, named Agabus, made a prediction of the approach of a severe dearth throughout all the land of Judea. Immediately following the Day of Pentecost, we had the story of the Community of Goods. Here we have the same spirit; and really for the same purpose, the disciples, everyone according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren who dwelt in Judea. This showed good feeling between the two religious centers. They sent temporal gifts to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. The material help that Barnabas brought to the people in Judea and Jerusalem, he having been absent for some time, would be an effective report of the work which the church at Jerusalem had commissioned him to do.

Here is a soul-saving church—the church in which for the first time the distinction between Jew and Gentile was forgotten in the larger brotherhood of Christ.

QUESTIONS.

Give meaning of "these days."

Who were these prophets? 27, cf. 21: 10-11.

The Christians must have been familiar with them, as they gave full credit to the prediction.

In taking collection, how much did each one give?

Whom did they send with the gifts?

Section V. Persecution Under Herod.**Acts 12: 1-25.****1. JAMES BEHEADED AND PETER IMPRISONED.****Acts 12: 1-4.**

(1) Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church. (2) And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. (3) And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. And those were the days of unleavened bread. (4) And when he had taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people.

The church had made great progress since the day of Pentecost. The Lord, from His throne, had given very decided victories in favor of the church. She had been able to triumph over religious persecution, she had burst the bars of Pharisaic legalism and established a church among Gentile converts. In establishing these victories we find the Lord dealing directly with the leaders of the church. Having gained the victory over Judaism and opened the door to the Gentiles, she was now to meet her third trial. The state now came to notice the progress of the church and put herself in the way of progress. Will the Lord be able to deliver the church from the enemy of the earthly throne as He did from the strong opposition of the Jewish church? It was at the time that Christianity was spreading beyond Palestine and a Gentile church was growing in Antioch, that Saul and Barnabas were preaching to crowded meetings for a whole year without any interruption. Herod, the grandson of Herod the Great, was in full sympathy with unregenerate Judaism. At this time he was known as King Agrippa I., and was sole ruler of Palestine. The great council could not take one of the Apostles and put him to death, but the king stretched forth his hand and put to death James, the brother of John, with the sword. Why God did not stay that hand before putting James to

death, shows that He did not always mean to deliver His disciples, but taught them that they were to be partakers of the sufferings of Christ. Herod had decided to do anything that would please his subjects, the Jews. Finding the death of James was highly acceptable, he arrested Peter and was only prevented from executing him immediately because the Passover feast was then being celebrated, which was not the proper time to put anyone to death. Herod, no doubt, knew that the Apostles had escaped when imprisoned by the Sanhedrim. Having already done what they could not do—put one of the Apostles to death—he now wanted to prove to the Sanhedrim that he could imprison Peter, that there would be no possible chance for him to escape before his execution. Sixteen soldiers were in charge of this one man, two inside the cell, Peter chained to them, two keeping guard outside at the inner and outer doors, others resting and ready for their time of service. It no doubt was Herod's intention to execute Peter publicly as soon as the Passover was over.

QUESTIONS.

Give some idea as to the progress of the church since Pentecost.

What two great victories has the church gained?

What power is now standing in opposition to the church?

Who was this Herod and what country did he rule?

Who was James and how was he killed?

He was one of the twelve, brother of John, and one of the three close followers of Jesus.

What reason is given for imprisoning Peter?

What time of the year is this?

2. PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON.

Acts 12: 5-12.

(5) Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him. (6) And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison. (7) And behold, an angel of the

Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. (8) And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. (9) And he went out, and followed; and he knew not that it was true which was done by (Gr. through) the angel, but thought he saw a vision. (10) And when they were past the first and the second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him. (11) And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. (12) And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying.

The state has undertaken to persecute and destroy the church. Will the church be able to fight the battle and gain the victory? When the Apostles were imprisoned by the Sanhedrim, because they preached Jesus, they were released and threatened that they must no longer teach in the name of Jesus. What were they to do? Just one thing left for them to do, and that was to get in touch with God by prayer. The church cried to the God who is the Creator, the Giver of strength and courage. They said to Him, "Lord, behold their threatening, and grant unto Thy servants that with all boldness they may speak Thy word, by stretching forth Thine hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy Child Jesus." God answered that prayer. They received a new baptism of the Holy Spirit. They went forth to preach with new power.

The disciples knew, not only by experience but by the teaching of Jesus, that prayer and God's Word are the weapons furnished the Christian by which to fight His battles and gain His victories. A prayer meeting was held at the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark. The church was put into the furnace that in this extremity it

might learn to lean heavily on the Lord, the Organizer and Builder of this church. These people, who had met at Mary's house, prayed to God without ceasing, that they might meet this opposition. On the very night before the day on which Peter was to be led forth and executed, he was sleeping between two soldiers, to whom he was chained. The Lord heard the prayers of the people. He dispatched an angel, a light shone in the prison, the angel touched Peter and raised him up, and spoke to him. His chains fell off his hands. He was told to gird himself and put on his sandals and put his garments about him and follow the angel. They came to a large iron gate, and it swung open of its own accord. The angel accompanied Peter a square and then departed. Peter now realized that it was not a dream, and knew that the Lord had sent the angel to deliver him from Herod and the pleasure of the Jews. Peter went to the house of Mary, where many people were gathered for prayer. He knocked at the door of the gate. A damsel came to see what it was. She recognized Peter's voice, and when she said it was Peter they would not believe it but said, "If it is anything it is Peter's angel."

QUESTIONS.

When and how were the Apostles delivered from the prison before?

How did they gain the victory when threatened by the Sanhedrim not to preach?

What was the church's only method by which to meet this opposition?

Why did Herod make the prison so secure at this time?

Describe Peter's release from prison.

Why did Peter not know what was done by the Angel?

All seemed so much like a dream that he was uncertain at first whether his deliverance was real or only a vision.

Where did Peter come to himself?

Where had the faithful church members a prayer meeting?

3. PETER SUDDENLY APPEARS AT PRAYER MEETING.

Acts 12: 13-17.

(13) And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer, named Rhoda. (14) And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate. (15) And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said, It is his angel. (16) But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed. (17) But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went to another place.

When Peter arrived at the house he knocked at the door of the gate. A damsel was sent to investigate. There was some danger in having a gathering of this kind in a town, in the midst of so many enemies, with a ruler who was so ready to execute. The damsel recognized Peter's voice and her heart filled with gladness; she went into the house and reported that it was Peter. But the people would not believe, and said that it must be Peter's angel. Peter continued to knock at the door, and when the people opened they were astonished when they saw him standing there. It was not the time to make a great noise, and so he beckoned with his hand that all should remain quiet. Then he told them how the angel had come and led him forth out of prison. Now there may have been other groups about Jerusalem that were engaged in prayer, and Peter desired that they should also be informed of his deliverance. Peter left this place, but did not give any information as to where he went.

QUESTIONS.

What did Peter do when he arrived at the meeting?

Knocked at the small low door at the entrance of the court-yard. This door was always kept fastened and never opened until the visitor had satisfied inquiries.

How did Rhoda know him and what did she do?

Why should people be surprised when their prayers are answered?

They were astonished, not really at the fact of an answer, but at the way in which it came.

Why did Peter beckon to them to hold their peace?

Their joy was so loud in its expression, and this unusual noise was dangerous, as it might call attention to his place of escape.

What other persons were to be informed of his release?

Who was James?

The brother of our Lord, and the pastor of the church at Jerusalem.

4. DEATH OF KEEPERS AND HEROD.

Acts 12: 18-23.

(18) Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. (19) And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the guards, and commanded that they should be put to death (Gr. led away to death). And he went down from Judæa to Cæsarea, and tarried there.

(20) Now he was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: and they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was fed from the king's country. (21) And upon a set day Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne (or, judgment-seat), and made an oration unto them. (22) And the people shouted, saying, The voice of a god, not of a man. (23) And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

In this paragraph our attention is not given to the church, but to the king and to the prison guards.

This release from prison must have been during the early morning watch. If this had occurred early in the night the discovery would have been made at the time when the guards were changed. Is it any wonder that such stir should be among these soldiers? It was the morning for

Peter's execution. Peter was gone. The soldiers were put on trial. They could not account for Peter's release. If they could have given any reason for Peter being absent from the prison they might have been able to save their lives. They were examined by the court, and the court would not admit any Divine agency in the evidence, and so they were sure to be held as unfaithful guards. Instead of one man, Peter, being executed, sixteen men were now put to death. Mary, Peter, and a hundred others could have told the royal officers, if they would have believed them, how Peter got away.

The feast of the Passover was now at an end and Herod left Jerusalem and returned to Cæsarea. Here he learned of a political difficulty. The inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, cities of Phœnicia, had offended him. There must be some reconciliation. These people secured the friendship of the king's high officer, Blastus, and the difficulty was adjusted. It was a matter of business, because the people of Phœnicia, bordering on the king's country, and because of commercial interest, must remain, under all circumstances, upon friendly terms with the king. A day was fixed for a great meeting, when the king, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne, and made an oration to the ambassadors from Tyre and Sidon.

When Herod had finished his address, the people testified their appreciation of his great power by loud applause, shouting, "It is the voice of a god and not of a man!" The king, instead of rebuking this flattery, received it as belonging to him. He descended from his throne, a very ill man. Thus he was smitten with a horrible and incurable disease. The angel was dispatched from the Lord, not to release him like he did Peter from the grip of his cruel hand, but to smite him because he fought against God and took honor to himself that belonged to God.

QUESTIONS.

Why were the guards put to death?

Did they not know where Peter was?

Peter had escaped during the night, let out by the angel, and the guards were embarrassed in the morning when Peter could not be found.

What really displeased Herod?

Why did Herod go to Cæsarea?

There must have been sixteen of them, and a conscience stained by the blood of an Apostle and sixteen faithful guards could not very well remain where the deed was done.

Why was he angry at the people of Phœnicia?

When was Herod punished and how?

The Lord on His throne has at His command angels to send forth to give assistance to His faithful workers, for His cause. But He also has at His command angels to dispatch and punish those by Divine judgment who are His great opponents.

5. SAUL AND BARNABAS RETURN TO ANTIOCH.

Acts 12: 24-25.

(24) But the word of God grew and multiplied.

(25) And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministration, taking with them John whose surname was Mark.

There was nothing that could stand in the way of the onward march of the Word of God. It pushed out of its path of progress the radical traditional system of the Jewish Sanhedrim, opened the door to the Gentile world and not only defeated the power of the state, but pronounced Divine judgment upon the king who sat upon the throne. During this entire period of opposition the Word of God was gaining in influence and power, and men and women were added to this new type of heavenly citizenship.

It was during the time of the famine and the strong opposition of the state against the church that they took the contribution of the Antioch church to the disciples in Judea and Jerusalem. Just where they were during this

entire time was not stated, but on returning to Antioch, John Mark, who was the son at whose home the prayer meeting was held on the night Peter was released from prison, accompanied them. On returning to the Antioch church, they would not have a very inspiring report to give of the work at Jerusalem, unless they had learned and could tell of Peter's deliverance and the Divine judgment which had fallen upon Herod.

QUESTIONS.

What victories were gained by the Word of God?

How did the persecution affect the growth of the church?

When did they return?

When they had paid in the money to the proper person and had taken care about the distribution of it to the persons for whom it was collected.

Who accompanied them and what preparation had he?

PART III

THE CHURCH OF THE GENTILES.

Acts 13: 1 to 28: 31.

From Paul's First Missionary Journey, A. D. 46, to the Close of New Testament, A. D. 95. The Church of the Gentiles Did Not Close at A. D. 95, but Continued Her Growth and Mission Until the Present Time and Will Not Cease Until the Scripture Is Fulfilled. The Acts of the Apostles Gives Us a History of the Early Church for About Thirty-four Years. So the Time From Paul's First Missionary Journey, A. D. 46, to the Close of the Book, A. D. 64, Was Eighteen Years.

Section I. Paul's First Missionary Journey.

Acts 13: 1 to 14: 28.

1. THE GREAT MISSIONARY CHURCH.

Acts 13: 1-3.

(1) Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. (2) And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. (3) Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

This chapter opens the third part of the Missionary book of the church. The second great center established for Christian work now comes to the front.

Saul and Barnabas, on their return from Jerusalem, no doubt continued their missionary efforts here for a con-

siderable time, until the aggressive work reported in this chapter. God was no longer the God of the Jews. The church at Antioch was at this time privileged in having in her midst many consecrated servants of God, who besides their evangelistic labors gave much time in companionship with God and in prayer. It was while they were thus engaged that the Holy Spirit spoke through some consecrated heart and said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." It was while these five were ministering in the church and fasting. It may be that in this very attitude before the Lord they were trying to learn the mind of Christ about this matter of a wider evangelization.

From the teaching here we infer that Saul and Barnabas had received a special revelation for this special work, previous to the message received by the church, in which their work was more definitely unfolded. A special time was set apart for fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands on these two missionaries, setting them apart for the special work for which they had been called.

QUESTIONS.

How long had Saul and Barnabas labored together, before being sent as a committee to Jerusalem?

What was the condition of the church at said period of labor?

Filled with missionary spirit, other persons had been taught and had become inspired teachers as associates of Saul and Barnabas.

Name the five important characters in this paragraph.

Who were the three associates, and would the church be safe in their hands?

Nothing more is known than is here stated, but this is enough to show that the future instruction of the congregation might be safely entrusted to their hands.

To whom did the Holy Spirit speak and when?

The Holy Spirit spoke to these Bible teachers when they were worshipping the Lord by prayer and fasting.

Give the address of the Holy Spirit on this occasion.

When was the call given?

Saul had received his call when he was converted, when he was told to be a chosen vessel and an Apostle to the Gentiles. But here we are informed that Barnabas, as well as Saul, had received a previous call to labor among the Gentiles.

When and why lay on hands?

The imposition of hands, accompanied by prayer and fasting, was in this place, as in that of the seven deacons, merely their formal separation to the special work to which they had been called. It was, however, also to aid the church in more fully knowing her obligations to those sent forth to work for the salvation of souls.

Give meaning of "sent them away."

The church was willing to release them from their duties to a home congregation, so they could do service for them in foreign fields.

2. JOURNEY AND LABOR IN CYPRUS.

Acts 13: 4-12.

(4) So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. (5) And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant. (6) And when they had gone through the whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer (Gr. Magus: as in Matt. 2: 1, 7, 16), a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus; (7) who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God. (8) But Elymas the sorcerer (Gr. Magus: as in Matt. 2: 1, 7, 16) (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. (9) But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him, (10) and said, O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? (11) And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for (or, until) a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. (12) Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Luke tells us that the missionaries were sent forth by the same Person, the Holy Spirit who had called them. Thus they were expected to look to Him for guidance and

not to men. The two missionaries, accompanied by John, went forth from the church of Antioch and came to Seleucia, a seaport at the mouth of Orontes. Seleucia was a fortified city, about sixteen miles from Antioch, but we have no account that they did any evangelistic work here, from the fact that this could be done by the home church. This was a seaport from which they sailed to the Island of Cyprus. The Isle of Cyprus, the former home of Barnabas, was the place to which they were guided by the Spirit. The nearest port was Salamis, a harbor on the east side of the island. Here was a large Jewish population, and Barnabas and Saul preached the Word in the synagogue. Here we receive the information that John was with them as a helper.

We have no record of any results at Salamis, nor as they make their journey across the island to Paphos, a town on the western shore. The missionaries up to this point had met with no opposition, but here Satan put himself in their way—a false prophet, a sorcerer, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus, also known as Elymas, who was a servant of the devil, and a perverter of truth. Sergius Paulus, the deputy of the country, an honest man, a seeker for the truth, sent for the two preachers that he might hear them expound the Word of God. Saul, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, set his eyes on the man whose mission there was for Satan, in keeping the people in darkness. After a severe rebuke in setting forth his real self and mission, the Lord sent judgment upon Bar-Jesus, and the deputy was rescued from this enemy of righteousness. “Thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.” The judgment passed upon him immediately. He was now physically the same as he was spiritually—blind, and was in need of some one to lead him by the hand. He was spiritually blind. In his blindness he claimed to be a leader when he needed to be led. The miracle had the effect of satisfying the deputy of the truth of Christianity and he became a convert. He

did not become a convert because of the sudden judgment that fell upon Elymas, but because of the doctrine of the Lord. For God's grace in the salvation of a sinner is more wonderful than all the judgments pronounced upon the unrighteous.

QUESTIONS.

Who called and sent forth the missionaries into this new field?

Mention the places the missionaries stopped in this paragraph. Where is Salamis and what did they do there?

Why go to Cyprus?

Cyprus lies about ninety miles southwest of Seleucia. The island is about sixty miles from north to south, and one hundred and fifty from east to west. This was the native place of Barnabas, and through his friends and acquaintances they would expect to have success.

Who is referred to as their assistant?

John Mark, author of the Gospel according to Mark, cousin to Barnabas, and son of Mary of Jerusalem. 12: 12, 25. Where is Paphos?

It is on the western extremity of the island, about a hundred miles from Salamis.

Who asked to hear Barnabas and Saul?

Who used his influence against Saul?

He not only pretended to foretell and was unable, but was false in character and aims, misleading men and teaching false doctrines for the sake of his own prophet.

Give meaning of names of Saul and Paul.

Saul was his Hebrew name, and hitherto, by his association with the Jews, he has been called by this name. Paul was his Gentile, or Roman name, and as he is now entering upon his Gentile work in the great Roman world it is natural that his Roman name should be used.

When Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit, what did he say to Elymas?

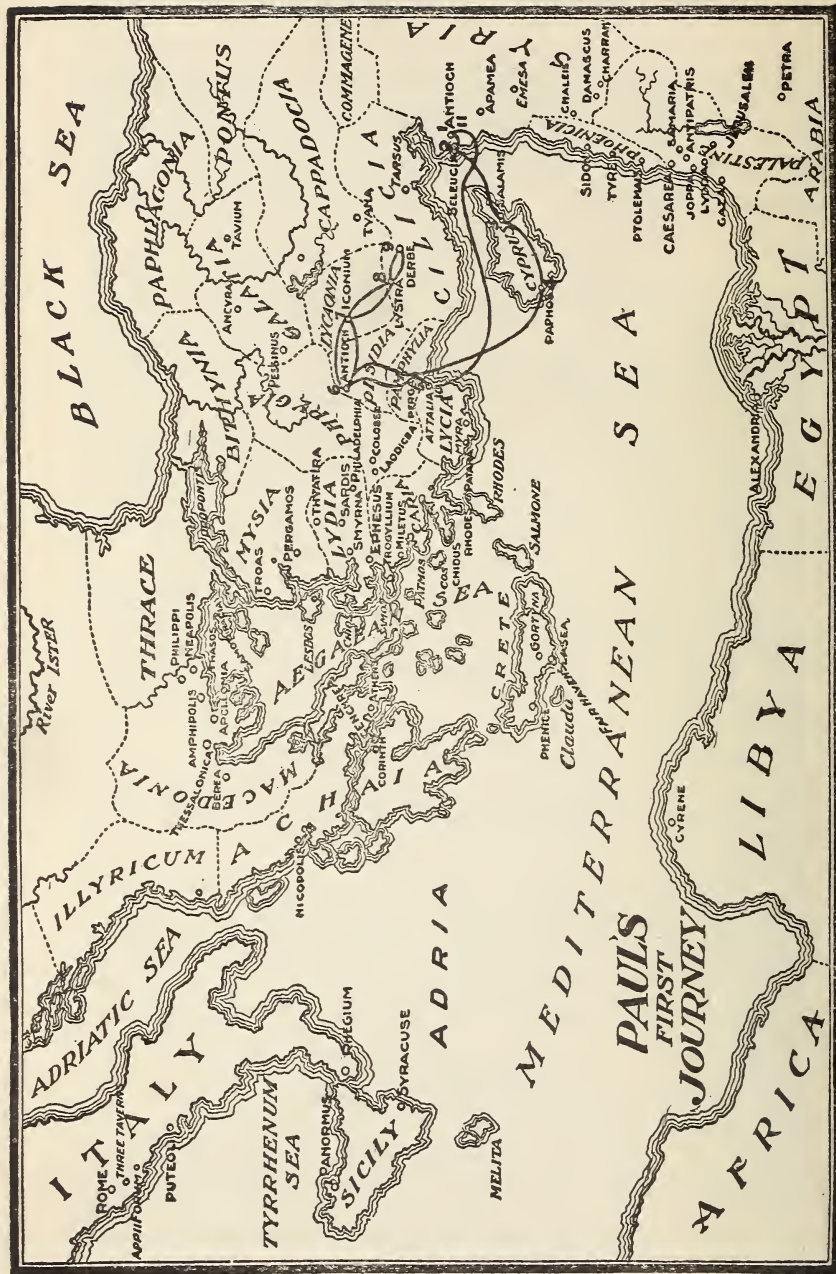
Why call him "Son of the devil"?

He had been adopted by his own choice.

How was he punished?

He was endeavoring to lead others into blindness and was himself blinded; "for a season" shows that this blindness was temporary.

What was the real effect of the missionary labors at Paphos?



3. JOURNEY FROM PAPHOS TO ANTIOCH.

Acts 13:13-15.

(13) Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, and came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. (14) But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. (15) And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

Paul, as the Apostle to the Gentiles, had a new experience in his dealings with Elymas. He showed himself possessed of power which he had not shown before. He was the chosen vessel and entered the place God appointed him to fill, and his name was changed to Paul. From this time forth he stood as the prominent figure in widening the borders of the missionary field.

The missionaries departed from Paphos and sailed to the coast of Asia Minor. Their first stopping place was Perga, a town of Pamphylia. As soon as Perga was reached, John, who was to be their helper, for some reason not stated, went back to Jerusalem. Luke does not even hint at this point that whatever reason he gave for leaving was unsatisfactory, which Paul shows (in 15: 37-39) when about to go on his second missionary journey and Mark perhaps desired to go with them again, which brought about the controversy between Paul and Barnabas.

We have no account of any missionary labors here at Perga, and they departed from Perga and went to Antioch. This Antioch was situated in Pisidia. In Antioch they found a synagogue, and according to the custom they joined in worship on the Sabbath day. These two strangers must have attracted some notice of the rulers of the synagogue. After the lessons of the day, portions of the Law and Prophets were read, then was the time for exhortations based upon what had been read. They were invited to speak to the people. This was in harmony with their mission; no doubt

they had introduced themselves as expositors of the Word and desired to address the people.

QUESTIONS.

Describe their journey from Paphos to Antioch in Pisidia.

They sailed from Paphos in a northwesterly direction to Pamphylia, a province of Asia Minor, and then visited Perga. From here they went to Antioch, in Pisidia, a distance of about one hundred and fifteen miles.

Why did John leave them and what is later said in Scripture about it? 15: 37-39.

What did the missionaries do when they got to Antioch?

They went into the synagogue and listened to the customary reading of a section of the Law and of the Prophets.

Why invite the strangers to speak?

4. PAUL'S FIRST RECORDED SERMON.

Acts 13: 16-41.

(1) Introduction.—Acts 13: 16-22.

(Proof from History.)

(16) And Paul stood up, and beckoning with the hand said,

Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken: (17) The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they sojourned in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm led he them forth out of it. (18) And for about the time of forty years as a nursing-father bare he them in the wilderness. (19) And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land for an inheritance, for about four hundred and fifty years: (20) and after these things he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. (21) And afterward they asked for a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for the space of forty years. (22) And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king; to whom also he bare witness and said, (1 Sam. 13: 14; Psa. 89: 20) I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will.

Paul, assuming his usual attitude, proceeded to deliver his address, in many points resembling that preached by Peter on the Day of Pentecost. His introduction showed

clearly that he knew what he was about to say and felt confident of its importance—that the Jewish nation was developed from men who had been called by God, and now the people had been exalted by Himself while they were strangers in the land of Egypt and delivered by His own strong arm. He did not only choose them and deliver them, but after being with these people and by His long suffering watched over them for forty years in the wilderness, He gave them the land promised the fathers more than four centuries before. After this he gave them judges for a period of about four hundred and fifty years. The four hundred and fifty years can be counted not from the arrival in Canaan, but from the time of the destroying of the nations by Joshua, which was twenty-five years, and from that point would be four hundred and fifty years to the end of David's reign. During this entire period God was gradually giving them a fuller possession of land. It was after this partial breaking down of the seven national powers by Joshua, and at the close of Joshua's conquest he continued these conquests for a space of four hundred and fifty years. Then we have reference to the first king, who was appointed from the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. When Saul was removed David was appointed king (1 Sam. 13: 14). These words are not spoken concerning the whole life of David, because we know there were periods in David's life that were not after God's own heart.

QUESTIONS.

Why beckon with his hands?

To what class of people did he call special attention?

Who was the Founder of the nation?

God chose and exalted the people.

What did He do for these people?

(1) He delivered them from Egypt; (2) gave them a country; (3) provided judges; (4) at their request He gave them a king; (5) after removing Saul He raised up David, the man after His own heart.

Give time of wandering; time of judges; time of Saul's reign.

(2) Jesus Preached as a Deliverer.—Acts 13:23-37.

(23) Of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Savior, Jesus; (24) when John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. (25) And as John was fulfilling his course, he said, What suppose ye that I am? I am not he. But behold, there cometh one after me the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose. (26) Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent forth. (27) For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. (28) And though they found no cause of death in him, yet asked they of Pilate that he should be slain. (29) And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. (30) But God raised him from the dead: (31) and he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses unto the people. (32) And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, (33) that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, (Psa. 2:7) Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. (34) And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, (Isa. 55:3) I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David. (35) Because he saith also in another psalm, (Psa. 16:10) Thou wilt not give thy Holy One to see corruption. (36) For David, after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell asleep (or, served his own generation by the counsel of God, fell asleep; or, served his own generation, fell asleep by the counsel of God), and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: (37) but he whom God raised up saw no corruption.

In accordance with the promises which He had so often made to David, God had as a crowning mercy of all raised up from David a Savior unto Israel, namely Jesus. This Jesus John preached, and asked Israel to repent that He might be their Savior. As John's ministry was drawing to a close, he especially emphasized the fact that he was not the Christ, that it was his mission to proclaim the One who was to come after him, and He was so exalted that as a

forerunner he was not worthy to perform the menial service of untying His sandals. And if this was the case it could be no one but Christ Himself. The Apostles showed further to these Jews, who were descendants of Abraham, and dwelt at Jerusalem as rulers, that Jesus was the Christ whom they had rejected—the very Person who was foretold by prophecy. It was He whom they put to death. Even the Gentile Pilate would have released Him.

The Apostle now gave the crowning fact in an address to these Jews. The very Person whom they crucified God raised up, and made it possible that that fact could be stated by a number who were eye-witnesses of His being alive, and had seen Him since the resurrection. This same fact is further emphasized by Paul, by quoting Scripture, using the second and sixteenth Psalms, and conclusively shows that these passages could not apply to David, the writer of these Psalms.

QUESTIONS.

When was this promise made? Vs. 23.

Jesus was a Descendant from whom?

What did John preach?

Give meaning of "John fulfilled his course."

What was the character of the Person to come after him?

Paul's purpose in referring to Abraham and Scripture?

He was speaking in a Jewish synagogue, to Jews and those who had joined with them, and conciliated them and warded off prejudice by referring to the early history of the Jews.

What reason did Paul give for condemning Jesus?

What was the testimony of the prophets? Isa. 7:14; 9:6-7; 40:10-11; Jer. 23:5; 33:14-15; Ezek. 34:23; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 6:12; Mal. 3:1; 4:2.

If they read scripture every Sabbath, why not understand them?

What did they do when they had fulfilled all things?

Who raised Him from the dead?

For how many days was He seen and by whom?

Paul sustains his position by quoting what Psalm?

Second Psalm refers to the fact that God is the real Father of Jesus.

Name three passages of Scripture, from the writings of the Prophets, to prove the resurrection.

(1) Psa. 2:7 establishes the truth respecting the eternal generation of the Son and His office as the Savior of the world.

(2) Isa. 55:3 declares that the promises of grace are inviolable and shall be fulfilled. (3) Psa. 16:10 distinctly sets forth that the Messiah shall not be subject to corruption.

(3) The Appeal.—Acts 13:38-41.

a. Encouragement.—Acts 13:38-39.

(38) Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: (39) and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Paul, in his preaching, had not only stated the fact of the Messiahship of Jesus, but showed that it was the teaching in the Scriptures given during the age of Prophecy. All the great teachers pointed to Him as the Messiah, and through Him proclaimed the remission of sins. This was the teaching of John the Baptist. Jesus Himself made this the central theme, and Peter in all his preaching made the remission of sins depend on faith in the risen Savior. The Apostle makes a contrast between Moses and Christ and tells us that all who believe on Christ are justified, not from some things, but from all things. The law could not justify men. The use of the law was to make man know sin, and faith in Jesus Christ frees man from the power of sin.

QUESTIONS.

What was the great need of each human being?

Who could receive the blessing referred to in vs. 38?

How can a man be justified from all things?

What does Paul say the Law could not do?

What was the real mission of the Law?

b. Warning.—Acts 13:40-41.

(40) Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets:

(41) (Hab. 1:5) Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish (or, vanish away, Jas. 4:14); for I work a work in your days, A work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you.

Many in the audience to which Paul preached no doubt showed signs of opposition, when he spoke disparagingly of the law and made his statement that every one who believed in Jesus was justified from all sin. The truth was contrary to their ideas and plans. Their traditional teaching was contrary to that which Paul preached. They looked for worldly splendor and power. They believed that God had meant salvation only for the Jews, and Paul offered it to any one who believed. The preacher warned the hearers against rejecting the good tidings which he had presented to them, and that if they did they would identify themselves with a class of people of whom the prophet Habakkuk speaks (1:5). By rejecting the truths presented, the judgment of God will visit you as well as it did your unbelieving fathers who were carried away by the heathen Chaldean nation. God sent prophets to your fathers as warnings, but they would not heed them, and now the same God speaks and no one can make you believe it any more than your fathers believed the prophets, or even as the truth was believed by the people to whom Noah preached. There is a judgment coming for all that believe not. The Gospel preacher, if true to his calling, gives the solemn warning that "he that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

QUESTIONS.

Why did some of his hearers get angry?

Why did he close with a warning, and what was it?

Why do people not believe when the truth is fully presented?

What judgment was visited upon unbelieving fathers? Hab. 1:5.

Why do wise men not learn from the sad experience of others?

5. THE EFFECT OF THE SERMON.

Acts 13:42-43.

(42) And as they went out, they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next sabbath. (43) Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

The Apostle had made the offer of salvation to the Jews, and will they reject its gracious invitation? Paul's sermon had made a very good effect upon the congregation as a whole. The people who were interested spoke to the Apostles as they were going out, and gave the minister a pressing invitation to come again the next Sabbath. This was done just as the services closed. The people had pressed around the Apostles, which showed their deep interest in what had been preached. Many Jews and proselytes even followed Paul and Barnabas, keeping up an earnest conversation about the religious work in which they were engaged.

QUESTIONS.

Who wanted them to return and why?

What kind of a sermon did they want the next Sabbath?

Who followed Paul and why?

Give meaning of "continued in the grace of God."

6. THE SECOND SABBATH IN ANTIOCH.

Acts 13:44-52.

(44) And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. (45) But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed (or, railed). (46) And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. (47) For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, (Isa. 49:6) I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the

uttermost part of the earth. (48) And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. (49) And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region. (50) But the Jews urged on the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their borders. (51) But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. (52) And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

The discourse had created great interest in Antioch. By the time for the second sermon the report of the new doctrine had spread throughout the whole city, and a great crowd gathered to hear the Gospel. This meeting must have been held in some open place about the synagogue, or the crowd could not have heard the message of the preacher. When the strangers, preachers, had such an influence over these people, the orthodox traditional Jews at once allowed Satan to take possession of them by pointing to these men as doing more than they could do, and that other men, even the Gentiles, were admitted unto the same high privileges as themselves. They denied and argued against the truth that Paul and Barnabas presented. They used abusive language and made false charges against the Apostles. This did not discourage Paul and Barnabas, but the Holy Spirit was present and gave them courage, and said that "it is really necessary that we should present the word of God first to you. Many in your nation have already rejected Jesus, and now we see that you also put Him away from you and pronounce judgment upon yourselves as being unworthy of eternal life. God did not shut them out of Heaven. They shut themselves out. They pronounced their own sentence. So every soul now, that does not receive Jesus Christ as his Savior, utters its own condemnation. Since you have refused, we turn to the Gentiles, 'for so hath the Lord commanded.'" They showed them what the Prophets of the Bible taught concerning this subject by quoting Isa. 49: 6. The religion of the Jews was never intended for Jews alone, but for all the world.

By refusing to give it to the Gentiles they lost it for a time themselves. This part of the sermon caused great joy among the Gentiles, many of whom believed, and the good news of salvation was preached throughout all that district. But this success of the revival among the Gentiles only deepened the hostilities of the Jews, who obtained some influence over the leading citizens, raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from the city. This persecution was not directed only against Paul and Barnabas, but against the whole body of believers. Paul and Barnabas, thus being expelled from the city, realized that in rejecting them and sending them forth with this stigma upon them, the Jews were in reality rejecting Him by whom they were sent. They remembered the command given by Christ as a solemn testimony against those who rejected Him (Matt. 10:14). They shook off the dust of their feet against them. These disciples were not full of anger, as one would suppose them to be, but were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS.

What effect had the first sermon in the synagogue at Antioch?
Why were so many present on the second Sabbath?

What was the part that caused the Jews to be jealous?

Show the contrast between the feelings of the Jews and the Gentiles.

Of what had the Jews judged themselves to be unworthy?

What was the promise made in Isa. 49:6?

That the mission of the Jewish nation was to accept Christ as their Savior and present Him as the Savior for the whole world.

What was it that brought joy to the Gentiles?

Where was the Word preached?

Who were the devout and honorable women?

Wives of the chief men of the city had come under the influence of the Jews by attending synagogue worship, and through these women they gained access to their unbelieving husbands, so as to induce them to expel Paul and Barnabas.

Why shake off the dust? 51, cf. Matt. 10:14.

How could the disciples be full of joy under such circumstances?

7. JOURNEYS AND LABORS IN ICONIUM.

Acts 14: 1-7.

(1) And it came to pass in Iconium that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed. (2) But the Jews that were disobedient stirred up the souls of the Gentiles, and made them evil affected against the brethren. (3) Long time therefore they tarried there speaking boldly in the Lord, who bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. (4) But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. (5) And when there was made an onset both of the Gentiles and of the Jews with their rulers, to treat them shamefully and to stone them, (6) they became aware of it, and fled unto the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the region round about: (7) and there they preached the gospel.

The Apostle Paul was well acquainted in Asia Minor, having spent his early years at his home in Tarsus. About three years after his conversion he made his headquarters in Cilicia, until he was invited by Barnabas to join him in the established work at Antioch. While we have no direct history concerning his work, yet we do not believe that a man like Paul could remain silent for those years and not tell the people in his community what he stood for. After they were expelled from Antioch, they made a journey of about seventy miles to Iconium, then the largest and most important city. They at once went to preaching the Gospel in the synagogue of the Jews. The preaching was attended with remarkable success, and the result of their revival effort was that many of the Greeks as well as the Jews accepted Christ. The Jews here, as well as in Antioch, could not stand the success which attended the Apostles' work, so the unbelieving Jews succeeded in prejudicing the minds of the Gentiles against the brethren. Even after this strong opposition by the Jews and Gentiles, the Apostle was given power to speak boldly in the Lord, and this speaking boldly in the Lord, being testified to by the word of His grace, proved that the word preached was true, en-

dorsed the preaching and mission of the Apostles. These signs were given as witness to the truth. It is absolute testimony that these Apostles were the messengers of God. The preaching of the Gospel had the same effect then as now. Those who accepted the truth became followers of Him whom Paul presented, and those who did not would be willing to join leaders who had no higher motive than the destruction of Truth, or Him who is Truth. The feeling became so bitter that it was their purpose to treat them shamefully or stone them. Before their resolutions could be carried out, the disciples became aware of it, and the Apostles hurriedly left the city and went to other towns—Lystra, Derbe, cities in Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, for the purpose of preaching the Gospel.

QUESTIONS.

How far was Iconium from Antioch?

When they arrived at Iconium where did they preach?

What was the success of their first missionary efforts?

Who was it that stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and why?

What was Paul's success even during the time of this strong opposition?

Why did Paul and Barnabas leave this missionary point so suddenly?

Give full history of their work at Iconium.

Where is Lystra?

About twenty-five miles southwest from Iconium.

8. PREACHING AND HEALING IN LYSTRA.

Acts 14: 8-18.

(1) A Miracle of Healing.—Acts 14: 8-14.

(8) And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. (9) The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, (10) said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked. (11) And when the multitude saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The

gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. (12) And they called Barnabas, Jupiter (Gr. Zeus); and Paul, Mercury (Gr. Hermes), because he was the chief speaker. (13) And the priest of Jupiter whose temple was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes. (14) But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out.

Paul and Barnabas, having been driven from Iconium by persecution, had come to Lystra and were preaching the Gospel when the miracle noted in this paragraph occurred. We have no particular account of the success that attended the labors of the Apostles in these two towns, in the making of many converts. That flourishing churches were founded here is evident from later history. The influence of preaching did not call attention to the Apostles as in the other cities, but here God draws men to Himself by giving His servants the power to heal.

This man was crippled from the time of his birth. Hearing Paul speak, and realizing the power of the message, he fastened his eyes upon him, and at once proved his faith in Him of whom Paul was speaking. Paul said, in a loud voice so that all could hear, "Stand upright on thy feet." The healing was instant, and the lame man leaped and walked about. The people, struck with what they considered to be Divine Power, manifested by the Apostles in the healing of this man, concluded that those who exercised such power must be themselves divine, and they said, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men." They at once gave names to the Apostles corresponding to their belief as to their relative position. Barnabas they gave the name of Jupiter, probably from his royal bearing, and probably he was an older man than Paul. Paul they called Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. This was the name given to the chief messenger and the god of eloquence. Not satisfied in giving them these high-sounding titles, during this excitement some had gone away to

bring offerings which were in readiness for a sacrifice to Jupiter, accompanied with garlands of flowers with which to decorate the animals or to crown the Apostles, or to decorate their house. The Apostles made a very earnest protest; when the real purpose of these people was known to the Apostles they rushed from the house and rent their clothes in token of grief, and ran in among the people, turning them away from their idolatrous purpose.

QUESTIONS.

What were the Apostles doing when the lame man presented himself to be healed?

Who had healed the lame man at the Beautiful Gate?

Describe the two healings and show difference in faith in the healing of the two men.

What effect had the miracle upon the people?

Why think the Apostles gods?

Meaning of names given them?

What effect had this upon the Apostles?

(2) Paul's Sermon on God's Goodness.—Acts 14:15-18.

(15) And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions (or, nature) with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: (16) who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations (or, Gentiles; see ch. 4:25) to walk in their own ways. (17) And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. (18) And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them.

The address of Paul here was admirably adapted to the people and the circumstances. After affirming that they themselves were not divine beings, the missionaries stated their object. It was their purpose to turn people's minds away from these vanities, dead idols, to the living God, the Great Creator of all things. While He was the Creator of all things, He had by His long-suffering allowed the nations

for centuries to walk in their own way, yet, during all these centuries, He was constantly training one nation, while the others were left to experiment with the light given them from the law of nature, until His trained nation should bring them the Light intended for all nations. But God's goodness is shown to these nations in sending rains and fruitful seasons. The preachers' efforts to divert the minds of the people from themselves to the living God, with considerable difficulty succeeded in preventing them from proceeding with the sacrifice.

Paul and Barnabas scarcely gained their end with all their efforts in drawing the heathen people's minds away from having them look to Paul and Barnabas as objects of worship instead of God, the Creator.

QUESTIONS.

Why did the missionaries not accept the praise?

They were not sent out to get people to worship themselves, and so they showed to their visitors that they were only men like themselves and their purpose was to point them to Jesus as their Savior.

What did the Apostles say about God as Creator?

What did the people insist upon doing for the Apostles?

9. THE STONING OF PAUL.

Acts 14: 19-20.

(19) But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. (20) But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe.

While Paul was making an effort to draw the people's minds to Jesus, in whose power the miracle was performed, the Jews were plotting against Paul, because they believed he was undermining their religion. The Jews are uniting their efforts, as we have Jews coming from Antioch and

Iconium, who were made bitter against Paul, and show how Paul was driven out by them from Antioch and by persecution driven out of Iconium, and after they present their case to these idolaters they unite with the Jews against the man who had just preached against their idols.

Surely, Israel judged itself unworthy of eternal life. Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city, and believed to be dead. After the mob had dispersed, the disciples stood round about Paul and were surely glad to see their great teacher gain consciousness and rise to his feet. While Paul suffered, yet his life was spared from the fury of the mob. He returned to the city, showed himself alive to the disciples, and the next day departed with Barnabas to Derbe, a distance of about twenty miles.

QUESTIONS.

Who caused this trouble?

The Jews in Antioch and Iconium stirred up the people by urging that Paul was an impostor and that all the honorable women and the chief men of Antioch and Iconium had united in driving him away from these cities.

Who stoned Paul?

The mode of punishment, as in the case of Stephen, showed that it was planned and executed by Jews.

Why say "drew him out of the city"?

In this heathen city there was no scruple that prevented stoning in the city as in Palestine.

Why return to the city?

It was necessary to show the discouraged heathen converts that Paul was still alive.

10. MISSIONARIES RETURN HOME.—Acts 14: 21-28.

(1) Revisiting the Churches.—Acts 14: 21-25.

(21) And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, (22) confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. (23) And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had

prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed. (24) And they passed through Pisidia, and came to Pamphylia. (25) And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

We are now at the last city in which the Apostles did missionary work on the first missionary journey. At this place the historian gives us no account of any opposition, and they established a church here by preaching the Gospel before leaving. They were about to leave and visit the churches on their way home. Before leaving this church, they wisely left the work in the hands of persons who would look after the welfare of the church. From every one of the cities that they were to visit they had departed suddenly, and before the churches could really be established in the faith satisfactorily to the persons who had planted them. It required no little courage to return to the places where they had been stoned and driven out.

They considered that their business was not complete when souls were converted. These souls were to be trained by teaching the Word, thus establishing them by proper training. Elders were elected and solemnly set apart, by prayer and fasting, to their sacred office. On their return, the Apostles did some preaching at Perga, but we have no information as to results.

QUESTIONS.

Locate Derbe, and what did the Apostles at this place?

What was the purpose of visiting the churches?

What is the tribulation referred to in v. 22?

Great persecution and martyrdom had to pass before the triumph of Christianity.

Why ordain elders?

The Apostles realized that teachers were needed, even among believers, and therefore furnished their new congregation with elders.

Give the location of the two Antiochs in which Paul preached.

(2) Journey to Antioch.—Acts 14: 26-28.

(26) And thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. (27) And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. (28) And they tarried no little time with the disciples.

After preaching at Perga, the Apostles went down to Attalia and took ship and sailed for home. On their arrival home, having been absent from the church about four years, they gave a full account to the church that sent them forth on this missionary labor, of all that God had done with them—that through Him the door of Faith was Divinely opened to the Gentiles. Luke does not give us any statement as to how the church received this report, as this does not concern him, because a church, sending forth in the Spirit as this one did, could not help but receive with great joy the report of the consecrated workers who had been sent forth by them under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS.

What report does Luke make of the work on the first and second visits to Perga?

From what place did they sail?

What report did they make to the home church?

Were they glad to include their suffering in their report?

In their report to the church what part of the work do they assign to God? What about opening the door to the Gentiles?

Section II. The Apostolic Council. Acts 15: 1-35.**1. SERIOUS DIFFICULTY IN ANTIOCH CHURCH.****Acts 15: 1-5.**

(1) And certain men came down from Judæa and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. (2) And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, the brethren appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should

go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. (3) They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phœnicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. (4) And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them. (5) But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses.

Paul and Barnabas had been used by the Lord in establishing a number of churches on their first missionary journey, and recognized that their special mission was to do work among the Gentiles. This they had learned to be very difficult because of meeting the opposition of the Jews, who felt that salvation was offered only to the Jewish nation; and if any Gentiles should receive salvation it must be in obedience to the teaching of the law and tradition. The Antioch church prospered and became the mother church for the Gentile converts. After the missionaries returned to this church and made their report, they soon found some trouble arising in this church, which was aggravated by men who came down from the church in Jerusalem, which was made up of all circumcised Jews, who insisted that salvation could be obtained only by obedience to the rite of circumcision, as taught by Moses. Paul and Barnabas had everywhere taught, both in the Antioch church and on their missionary journey, that circumcision was not binding on Gentile converts, and he had uniformly acted in accordance with his teaching. We know that God had settled this matter Himself in the case of Cornelius, and considerable time had elapsed since and the number of Jewish Christians had been greatly increased. During this period of increase in Jewish Christians came the renewal of this controversy, and serious disturbance in the Antioch church. Paul opposed these Judaizing teachers, which resulted in a heated discussion, without producing any definite settlement in this point of the dispute.

In the early church the affairs were directed by authority higher than man. A special revelation at this time was communicated, either to Paul or the church (Gal. 2:2), to send a committee to Jerusalem, that this important question might be settled, not for the church of Antioch alone, but for all the churches already established and that would be established in the time to come. The question was not taken to Jerusalem for a decision by a higher tribunal, for in fact no such decision had been rendered. This question had been decided a number of years before, and the new converts who had come into the church had not received the information that Peter had given to the Jerusalem church at that time, which showed that God Himself had settled this question, and the Jerusalem church only confirmed what Paul had so earnestly set forth before the Antioch church was in keeping with God's own directions.

The journey to Jerusalem was made by land, passing through Phenice and Samaria, where considerable preaching had been done before. They declared the conversion of the Gentiles, which brought great joy to the people in the district through which they traveled. When they arrived at Jerusalem they were formally received by the church and its leaders. Paul and Barnabas at once made a report of their work among the heathen. No one in the church seemed to doubt their interest from the report given, but certain of the believing Pharisees held that, in addition to all that had been done, it was necessary that these Gentile converts should be circumcised and commanded to keep the law of Moses.

QUESTIONS.

Give date of the Jerusalem council.

It was about A. D. 50. The church had been in existence about twenty years. It had extended over Palestine, Phœnicia, Damascus, Antioch, Cyprus, and part of Asia Minor. There had been a gradual development and broadening of the church for at least fifteen years, since the death of Stephen.

What was the serious difficulty in the church at this time?

The Jews wanted the Gentiles to be saved. However, the stricter orthodox tradition-believing Jews felt that the Gentiles must first become Jewish proselytes and submit to the Jewish ceremonial law.

Where were these teachers educated that made the trouble in the Antioch church?

Who referred the matter to Jerusalem and why?

What was the distance to Jerusalem?

It was a journey of about three hundred miles, southward along the Mediterranean Sea.

What did Paul and Barnabas do on the journey that caused great joy?

2. MEETING OF APOSTLES AND ELDERS, AND SPEECHES AT COUNCIL.—Acts 15: 6-21.

(1) Speech of Peter.—Acts 15: 6-11.

(6) And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter. (7) And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them,

Brethren, ye know that a good while ago (Gr. from early days) God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. (8) And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; (9) and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. (10) Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? (11) But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they.

After the Pharisees had made a statement that the Gentiles could not be received into the church without the rite of circumcision, the meeting adjourned to come together later. It was some time between this adjournment and the public meeting of the church that Paul and Barnabas had a private meeting with the leaders of the church (Gal. 2:2-3), seeking to know their mind concerning the matter of bringing the Gentiles into the church. He was anxious to know if these Apostles were in harmony with the believing Jews and would give their strength to sup-

port the measure of bringing the Gentile converts under the bondage of the Mosaic law.

It may be possible that at the first part of this meeting the entire church had not gathered, and Peter made his address to the leaders. Before Peter made his address there was much disputing, principally by those who had not understood God's direct method in opening the doors to the Gentiles. Peter made a full statement of the same facts he had presented to this church, of how the Gentiles had been brought into the church by direct revelation while he was at Joppa, and also by direct revelation to Cornelius to send for him that he might preach the Gospel unto them. "And God who was their Witness, gave them the Holy Spirit, the same as he did to us on the day of Pentecost." "Thus He broke down the wall of difference between us, and the hearts of all are purified through faith. By this discussion we are failing to recognize God and submit to Him, and therefore tempt Him. What use is there to put the burden upon others, that is grievous and unable to be borne by ourselves? By compelling the Gentiles to become debtors to the whole law (Gal. 5:3), we ask them to do more than we or our fathers could do in the bearing of the Mosaic law and traditions which were forced upon us."

Peter concluded his address. The Jews as well as the Gentiles were saved by the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS.

What did the people do after the delegates made their statement and Pharisees insisted that Gentiles must be circumcised?

How did Paul learn the mind of the Apostles about their attitude on the question before the public meeting of the church?

Why were some of the church members in Jerusalem demanding circumcision of Gentiles?

These may have been new converts, or not present when Peter made the statement to the church after opening the way for Gentiles to be converted.

What did he say about obedience to the rites themselves that they had put upon others?

How did God bear witness?

By giving to the Gentiles the same Spirit as was given to the Apostles on Pentecost.

How purify the heart?

We are not saved through the merits of obedience to the law, but through faith in Jesus.

How tempt God?

By their inclination to act in opposition to His will, clearly manifested in the case of Cornelius.

Meaning of "put a yoke upon the neck which we nor our fathers were able to bear"?

It was not only circumcision, but the entire Mosaic law. This law could not be fulfilled and so was not a means of salvation, but faith in Jesus Christ.

(2) Speech of Barnabas and Paul.—Acts 15: 12.

(12) And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through them.

Peter's speech had a great influence upon the people. The Pharisees themselves could no longer object. If they were not fully convinced, at least he had silenced them, and opened the way for Paul and Barnabas to give a full account of their labors. The audience was quiet and gave due respect to their interesting report. Their statement was, no doubt, somewhat similar to the one made by Peter, showing that God had manifested Himself by wonders and miracles during their mission among the Gentiles. Thus it was that God Himself gave testimony by these manifestations, that His Word as preached by the Apostles, was the Way of Salvation.

QUESTIONS.

Why say "all the multitude"?

The brief statement of facts by Peter had such a good effect upon the multitude that Barnabas and Paul decided to follow with the rehearsal of similar facts in the history of their own labors among the Gentiles.

Why did they both speak?

Barnabas' name is mentioned first, and no doubt he spoke first because he was more familiar with the church at Jerusalem, and gave Paul the closing argument on the points that had been stated.

What was the connection of their argument with what Peter said?

Their reports not only confirmed but also more fully developed what Peter had communicated as to the result of his experience in bringing the Gentiles into the church.

(3) Speech by James.—Acts 15: 13-21.

(13) And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying,

Brethren, hearken unto me: (14) Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. (15) And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

(16) (Amos 9: 11, 12) After these things I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

(17) That the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called,

(18) Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old.

(19) Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them that from among the Gentiles turn to God; (20) but that we write unto them (or, enjoin them), that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood. (21) For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath.

The two missionaries having made their report to the church, James, a man of great influence with the Jew and Gentile believer, now proceeded to address the assembly. Peter had made a careful statement of how God manifested Himself when he preached, in the bringing in of the Gentiles, and the two missionaries testified that in their preaching God bore testimony to strengthen them in their mission of bringing Light to the Gentiles. James now supported these facts by showing that God bore testimony through the prophets as revealed in His Word (Amos 9: 11-12), that the heathen, which no one would deny in this meeting, formed a part of spiritual Israel, of whom Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was to be the Head. If these facts and revela-

tions by the prophets were correct then these were not to submit to the rite of baptism for admission into the church. This prophecy was not taught by Amos alone, but other prophets spoke in harmony with Amos. Jesus Christ was creating a new nation, a called-out people, not restricted to any race or nation, but in accepting Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of the world. This revelation of the mystery, which was not revealed, was now made known by the Holy Spirit directing the mind of James. James knew the feeling of the Jewish nation and how firmly they held to the teaching of the law; and while they could not impose the law upon their brethren, it might harmonize the differences and produce better feelings and be no disadvantage to the Gentiles to lay upon them certain restrictions. Four things he requested that the Gentiles should abstain from. The heathen had lived so long in sin and in worship of idols, sin was so common among them, that they had lost all conscience about it. Moses' law, which was to be read in the synagogue, forbade some of these sins as practiced by the heathen. They were to abstain from pollution of idols, fornications, things strangled, and from blood. We know that it was sinful to have any connection with idols or to indulge in fornication—that is the strict teaching of the law; and from the time the revelation was made to Noah, eating blood or things strangled, in which the blood would be retained, was wrong and would always be so.

QUESTIONS.

Who was the last speaker and what position did he hold in the church?

He was the bishop of the church in Jerusalem. He was the brother of the Lord. He spoke as the bishop of the church while the Apostles had spoken by the mouth of Peter.

Explain reference to the tabernacle of David. 16, cf. Amos 9: 11-12.

David, in the beginning, was a shepherd and dwelt in tents, and his house, which had been a stately palace, had become a displaced tabernacle. God did, in return, raise it out of ruin and build it again. The tabernacle was built in Christ,

and now the prophecy of Amos was being fulfilled by the extension of His kingdom among the Gentiles.

Why refer to Moses after the advice? 20.

James states that, besides private admonition, they should be publicly warned to abstain from pollution of idols and from fornication, as these gave most offense to the Jews. They were also to abstain from things strangled and from blood, which though not evil in themselves, as were the other two, yet were forbidden by the precepts of Noah (Gen. 9:4) before even the Law of Moses was given. The Jews had a great dislike to them and therefore, to avoid giving offense, let the Gentile converts learn from the Scriptures what was expected of them (1 Cor. 8:9-13). There was no danger that the Mosaic law would be forgotten, because it was read every Sabbath.

3. DECISION AND LETTER OF COUNCIL.

Acts 15:22-29.

(22) Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: (23) and they wrote thus by them, The apostles and the elders, brethren, (or, The apostles and the elder brethren), unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: (24) Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out (some ancient authorities omit "who went out") from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; (25) it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, (26) men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (27) We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. (28) For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: (29) that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well.

James seemed to satisfy the minds of the Jews concerning the bringing in of the Gentiles without obedience to the law, and thought that by so doing the Jewish law would not only be brought into disrepute but would be entirely

forgotten. But the service being held in the synagogue, each Sabbath, and the law read, would make it so that the law could not be forgotten. James had so fully expressed the situation that it seemed to give entire satisfaction to the church at Jerusalem and the delegates who had been there from the Antioch church. It was agreed then that this opinion should be put in the form of a letter, which should be read in the districts where the different Gentile churches were located. And to show the deep interest in the welfare of the church they set apart two men of influence to accompany Paul and Barnabas, to carry this good news back to the churches. It was their purpose to correct the false teaching of those who had gone forth from Jerusalem, saying that the Gentiles must be circumcised, when they had been given no such authority by the Christian believers at Jerusalem. These two men appointed by the church, with Paul, immediately returned to Antioch. These two brethren, before leaving the church, received recognition for their great interest in the cause of Christ and were praised for the great sacrifice they made in giving their lives to the opening of missions among the Gentiles. We learn here from verse 28, that the Holy Spirit was directing this meeting, and the disciples were directed by Him in framing this wonderful document, which is so brief and tactful. It produced absolute harmony between the mother church of the Jews and the mother church of the Gentiles. Is it not great when the Holy Spirit is permitted to speak and influence the church never to lay any burden on any follower of Jesus more than that which Jesus requires?

QUESTIONS.

What about the advice of James?

It was approved and agreed to unanimously.

Give the names of the persons appointed to accompany Paul and Barnabas.

Judas, surnamed Barsabbas; Barsabbas means the son of Sabas. Nothing further is known of him. Silas, shortened form of Silvanus, became Paul's missionary companion. These

delegates were sent to give strength to the document sent forth by the Jerusalem church.

Why send a written decision?

To show that those who had gone from Jerusalem and had troubled the Gentiles exceeded their authority.

How was this liberty established?

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, by His action upon the Gentiles, and as related in the conference, convinced by argument, by the inspired Scriptures and by the work of the Holy Spirit.

4. PEACE RESTORED IN ANTIOCH.

Acts 15: 30-35.

(30) So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. (31) And when they had read it, they rejoiced for the consolation. (32) And Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted (or, comforted) the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. (33) And after they had spent some time there, they were dismissed in peace from the brethren unto those that had sent them forth. (35) But Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

The time had come for the brethren to leave the church in which they labored for a little while, so that perfect harmony might prevail in all the churches. It must have been an interesting period for the Antioch church, waiting for the return of the delegates, to learn what results their visit would have upon the troubles then existing in this church. This had been a very spiritual body, used by the Holy Spirit to send forth missionaries, and no doubt, members would be together in prayer that the work should not be hindered. As soon as they arrived a church meeting was being held, the letter then was read, and Judas and Silas, being prophets, whose hearts were filled with good things, delivered messages to these people, confirming the report given by the letter, and gave valuable assistance to the church at this time. Great joy was experienced in the church in the reading of this letter, and in the good words

and wishes brought them by these two appointed for said purpose. The church, being well pleased, sent forth these messengers in peace, that they might return to Jerusalem. But Silas felt a call to remain there at that time. After this difficulty was adjusted Paul and Silas continued their missionary efforts for some time in the home church.

QUESTIONS.

What was done when they reached Antioch?
 How did the church receive the news?
 What name did they give Judas and Silas and why?
 What did Paul and Barnabas do?

Antioch still continued to be a fruitful field for Apostolic labors. It is generally understood that it was during the period between the return from the council A. D. 50 and the second missionary journey, that Peter visited Antioch and the rebuke was administered to him by Paul (Gal. 2: 11-14). Peter's fault was not in disobeying what had been recorded in the letter from the council, but in refusing to associate and eat with them in private circles.

Section III. Paul's Second Missionary Journey. Acts 15: 36 to 18: 22.

1. SEPARATION OF PAUL AND BARNABAS.

Acts 15: 36-41.

(36) And after some days Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they fare. (37) And Barnabas was minded to take with them John also, who was called Mark. (38) But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. (39) And there arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder one from the other, and Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed away unto Cyprus: (40) but Paul chose Silas, and went forth, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. (41) And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

The second missionary journey opened with an unfortunate difficulty between Paul and Barnabas. They must

have labored in the Antioch church for some time after the council. Paul, the chosen vessel and Apostle of the Gentiles, realized that he ought to go forth on another mission tour, and said to Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren and learn just how they are getting along." John at this time was at Antioch, and Barnabas being related to him, seemed to have much more confidence in him as a helper on the second missionary journey than Paul had. Paul, no doubt, based his evidence on what occurred on the first journey at Perga, when John forsook them and went home. The controversy was, however, so strong that they decided to separate, and each go forth into different fields. Barnabas, taking Mark, went into the missionary field at Cyprus, and Paul took Silas, and after receiving the recommendations from the church and having the favor of God, went through the country of Syria and Cilicia, opening the second missionary tour.

We learn from Paul's letters which he wrote later, that Mark nobly redeemed his character and proved himself a valuable soldier of Jesus Christ. Writing from Rome during his first imprisonment, the Apostle gave the Colossians special charge to receive Mark (Col. 4:10). Just a few months before Paul's death, writing to his beloved son Timothy, he asked him to take Mark with him, for he had found him very helpful to the ministry. It is in vain to inquire who is to blame for the difference between Paul and Barnabas. No hint is even given in the story. There is no doubt that Mark's failure, some years earlier, was the cause of the separation of these friends. Some people, when they cannot do as they like, then do nothing at all. But here God's work went on. The special thing that is after all valuable in these differences is that we have two missionary companies instead of one.

The harvest is ripe for the reapers. The call is from the Lord. Let no obstacle be in your way to "occupy till He comes."

QUESTIONS.

What did Paul say to Barnabas when ready to go on the second journey?

Why was Barnabas so determined to take his relative when he wanted to do church work?

Where did Barnabas and John go?

They went to the Island of Cyprus, Barnabas' native home. His name is not mentioned again by Luke. Barnabas and Mark no doubt revisited the brethren in Cyprus at the places where Barnabas and Paul had preached. Paul later changed his mind about Mark, and no doubt Mark learned many valuable lessons for future service from his association with Barnabas (2 Tim. 4:11). Paul and Barnabas had amicably adjusted their difficulty.

What fitness had Silas for missionary work? 15:22-23.

2. THE CALL OF TIMOTHEUS.

Acts 16:1-3.

(1) And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess that believed; but his father was a Greek. (2) The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. (3) Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Luke mentions, in the former paragraph, the journey of Paul and Silas through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. He fails to give us any account of evangelistic efforts, and hurries us to the well-known places of Derbe and Lystra, familiar to us from incidents in the first missionary journey. At Lystra Paul had healed the cripple, which created quite a stir in the city, and later these same people, who thought Paul a Divine man, stirred up by Jews from Antioch and Iconium, stoned Paul. It is at Lystra that we are introduced to a new and very important character, who became a very close associate with Paul in the missionary field, and to whom Paul looked for sympathy and support in the severest trials and to the very close of his life. At Lystra resided Eunice, a Jewess, who lived

with her mother, Lois, of whom Paul, in his last letter to Timothy, speaks as a mother and grandmother of unfeigned faith, which he recognized as transmitted to the son Timothy. These two godly women were true to the instructions given them concerning the teaching of the Bible to the children. Timothy was instructed from his infancy in the Holy Scriptures. (2 Tim. 3:14-15.) These persons must have been familiar with Paul in his missionary labors while at Tarsus, and Timothy may have united with the church when he was on his first missionary work at Lystra; and no doubt witnessed the stoning of Paul and saw how God cared for him in raising him to life. Paul saw in this young Christian just the man fitted to go forth in this work for the Lord. Timothy's father was a Greek, and beyond this information regarding him the historian is silent. Timothy was already a Christian and anxious to join him, and in order to make him more acceptable to the numerous Jews who still were interested in circumcision, he took him and circumcised him. It may be possible that this rite had not been performed because his father was a Greek. The Jews were not ready to accept, as a leader, any one who was not circumcised. It seems strange that so soon after Paul refused before the council at Jerusalem to have Titus circumcised, he should at this time recommend the circumcision of Timothy. The demand, however, of the Jews was that salvation was only through circumcision and the keeping of the whole law. The Pharisees therefore insisted that all must be brought under the law for salvation, but Paul said it was faith in Jesus Christ. The circumcision of Jews, like that of Timothy, was for an altogether different purpose. We are taught in the Old Testament, as well as by Christ (John 7:22), that the rite of circumcision originated, not in the time of Moses, but in the covenant with Abraham. If it originated with Abraham, then it was before the law, and Timothy was circumcised, not because it was demanded for salvation, but to perpetuate the cov-

enant with Abraham, and continued a national mark. Therefore Paul insisted in all of his teaching (Gal. 5:6), "in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love." We have in this incident a beautiful illustration of the Apostle's great principle, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:20-22).

The well-known fact that Timothy was uncircumcised would seriously interfere with his usefulness among his own countrymen. To remove this obstacle, as there was danger of Timothy himself misinterpreting the act, the Apostle, without hesitation, circumcised him. But, when false brethren sought to compel him to circumcise Titus, a pure Gentile, on the ground that it was essential to salvation, Paul sternly refused.

QUESTIONS.

Locate Derbe and Lystra.

When did Paul meet Timothy first, and where?

Name the mother and grandmother of Timothy, and what special help did he receive from home?

Why do children not have more religious faith transmitted now by their parents?

How reconcile circumcision with Gal. 5:2-4?

What was the origin of circumcision and why did Paul recommend it?

3. REVISITING AND ORGANIZING GALATIAN CHURCHES.

Acts 16:4-8.

(4) And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem. (5) So the churches were strengthened in the faith (or, in faith), and increased in number daily.

(6) And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia (or, Phrygia and the region of Galatia), having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; (7) and when they

were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; (8) and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.

Having added to their number Timothy, they visited all the churches already planted and delivered unto them the letter received at Jerusalem regarding circumcision. Silas, who had come with Paul from Jerusalem, made a statement to these different churches, and seemingly an entirely different spirit prevailed from that on the first journey. Very aggressive work was being carried on at revival efforts and new members were added to the church daily. After having visited all these churches, they turned their attention to the north and the east in order to visit the populous region of Galatia and then pass west to Phrygia. Our account here tells us only that they passed through these places, but from later accounts we conclude that they must have done some preaching in Galatia. But they, being under the direction of the Spirit, were not permitted to continue their preaching in this region. Then their purpose was to go into Mysia and into the province of Bithynia. But they were not following man-made plans but the Spirit's plan, which was to go down to Troas.

QUESTIONS.

Who were Paul's companions in visiting the other churches in Asia Minor?

What report did they bring to the churches and what was the effect?

How often were people added to the church on this visit?

What is said about preaching in Galatia? 6, cf. 18:23; Gal. 4:13-14.

There were a number of churches organized in Galatia; and on the third missionary journey, while at Corinth, Paul wrote a letter to these churches in which he gave some very helpful advice and told of his interesting experience during this period of his labors in Galatia.

How did Paul and his companions know where to do missionary work?

4. THE CALL TO MACEDONIA.

Acts 16: 9-10.

(9) And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. (10) And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

We are told by the author how these missionaries had intended to labor in Asia, but the Holy Spirit suffered them not, and now they abode at Troas. From this place the Islands of the Ægean Sea and the distant land across could be distinctly seen. God's servants were not left long in doubt as to what they were to do, but had brought before them in a vision a representative from Macedonia, giving them an invitation for a new missionary field. Into this new missionary field they moved very quietly, but never forgot that they were servants of God and their mission was to hold up Jesus as the Savior of the unsaved. When the disciples moved forward, knowing definitely, as these disciples did, that they were led by the hand of the Lord, then the blessings of the Lord could not help but be upon their labors.

QUESTIONS.

Who prepared Paul for this vision?

What was the special burden resting on the hearts of the Apostles?

Paul had a vision, so that he might carry forward the work that was the real burden on his heart.

Where was Macedonia?

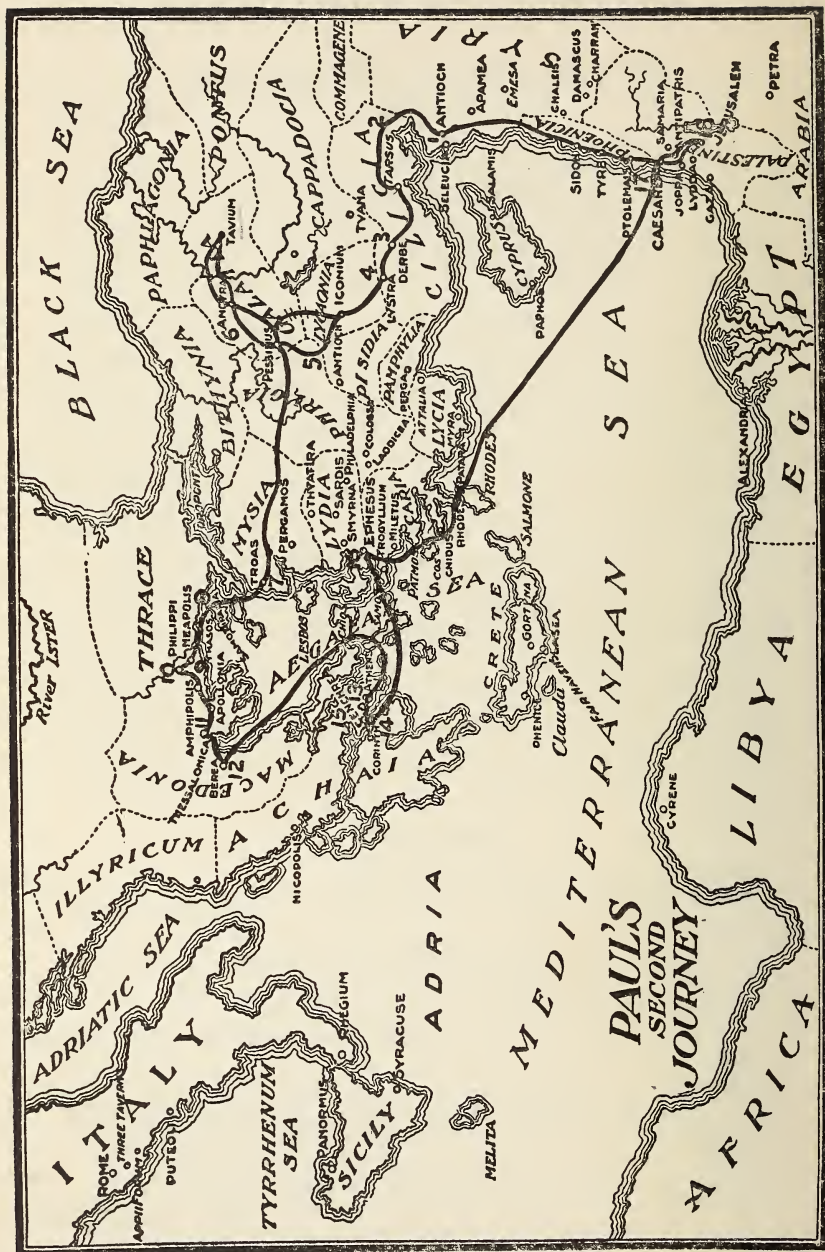
It lay north of Greece and had Thessalonica for its capital.

Meaning of "prayed him"?

It does not come in the shape of a command from Christ, but in that of a petition, that pleads for fellow-men who are in need.

What did the missionaries decide to do?

They immediately went into the field where God would have them preach the Gospel.



5. JOURNEY TO EUROPE AND FIRST CONVERTS.

Acts 16: 11-15.

(11) Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; (12) and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days. (13) And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer (many authorities read "where was wont to be," etc.); and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together. (14) And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. (15) And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

The three missionaries were together on this journey up to Troas, and now, after they are about to leave Troas, the historian changes from speaking in the third person into speaking in the first person. Therefore we know that Luke accompanied the missionaries from this point. These four, taking ship at Troas, sailed across the waters in a straight course, showing the wind was in the right direction, and came to the island of Samothrace. Here they remained during the night and the next day they arrived at Neapolis, which was known as the seaport for Philippi. It was about ten miles from Neapolis to Philippi. It required about two days to cross from Troas to Neapolis and arrive at Philippi. We have thus far not learned of any persecution in this city, and no synagogues were found here. They found a number of women who gathered on the Sabbath for prayer, on the bank of the river. This showed a great interest in these women in the higher things of life. These devout women were in communication with God, as was Cornelius, and we can now see why the missionaries were not permitted to continue their work in Asia Minor but directed to this new field of labor. These people by the

river side were ready for the Gospel, as was Cornelius when he sent for Peter.

As they had gathered for prayer, Paul was directed to speak to them, and we have the first revival in Europe. The Gospel was moving steadily forward. The truth that Peter spoke by the power of the Lord opened Lydia's heart, and she and her associates were instructed and baptized by the missionaries. After their missionary efforts and the new church was organized at this place, the missionaries accepted Lydia's hospitality.

QUESTIONS.

Describe the journey.

How many days did it take them?

Why suppose there was a place for prayer?

Why not go to the synagogue?

Where is Thyatira?

This is one of the seven churches located on the border line of Mysia and Lydda. It was celebrated in very early days for its purple dyes and fabrics.

What was the character of Lydia?

She worshiped God, was truly religious, and perhaps a Jewish proselyte.

How was Lydia's heart opened?

(1) The Apostle spoke to the women. (2) Lydia listened to hear the message. (3) God opened her heart. (4) She attended to the things spoken.

How did she make a public profession?

Give meaning of "Judge me to be faithful."

Then prove it and reward me by coming into my house—make it your home.

6. FIRST MIRACLE IN EUROPE.

Acts 16:16-18.

(16) And it came to pass, as we were going to the place of prayer, that a certain maid having a spirit of divination (Gr. a spirit, a Python) met us, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. (17) The same following after Paul and us cried out, saying, These men are servants (Gr. bondservants) of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way (or, a way) of salvation. (18) And this she did for many days. But Paul, being

sore troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour.

Lydia was the first convert in Europe. She was like all the others in Europe who needed Christ as a Savior. As the Apostles were remaining at the comfortable home of these converts, and attended these services at the river side, Paul was met more than once by a female slave, who was possessed with a spirit of divination. It was a Python spirit, supposed by the heathen to be inspired by the serpent called Python, to whose wisdom these messages were directed. Luke does not endorse this pretended inspiration. The girl, no doubt, was demon-possessed, of which we hear so frequently in the Scriptures. Paul at once spoke to the spirit and commanded it to come out of her, and after this was done they made the damsel incapable of being used as an instrument to bring gain to these people. She belonged to a company, and through her supposed power brought considerable gain to them by her services. She was under the control of an evil spirit, and Paul, moved with holy indignation at this show of the devil's power, commanded the spirit to come out of her, and his voice was obeyed instantly.

The girl, who was sold to evil men for financial gain, was anxious to hear of the better way of life. Many are now sold, and in the devil's service, who can be set free by men and women of God who are His holy messengers.

QUESTIONS.

What was the spirit of divination?

This damsel was in real possession of satanic activity in human affairs, which was very profitable to her owners.

Why object to her testimony?

What did Paul command the evil spirit to do?

Whose authority did Paul use to expel the spirit?

7. PAUL AND SILAS SCOURGED AND IMPRISONED.

Acts 16: 19-24.

(19) But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone (Gr. come out), they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers, (20) and when they had brought them unto the magistrates (Gr. *prætors*), they said, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, (21) and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans. (22) And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent their garments off them, and commanded to beat them with rods. (23) And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: (24) who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

It appeared that the church could not travel into any new field without stirring opposition. Hitherto no public notice seemed to have been taken of the Christian work going on, but just as soon as the devil was interfered with in his work, he had servants at his command to make the attack. The owners of the damsel, deprived of their gain, caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market-place, before the rulers. The charge brought against the Apostles was one that immediately appealed to the Roman citizens. Anything that would interfere with the increase of finances would arouse suspicion. Knowing these men to be Jews, the charge against them before the magistrates was, "These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans." This stirred the magistrates, especially when they learned they were Romans, and bringing another religion which was directly opposite to theirs. The magistrates joined the enraged people in stripping the two messengers of the Lord of their clothes, which was an insult to the missionaries. After they had laid many stripes upon them they cast them into prison; the jailer was

charged especially to keep them safely, and because of this he thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks. They could scourge and imprison the Apostles, but they could not hinder the triumph of the Gospel.

QUESTIONS.

When the demons were driven from the damsel, what loss was that to her master?

Where were Timothy and Luke?

They as subordinate companions were not molested.

Why beat them before imprisonment?

Describe the inner prison and stocks.

8. PRAYER AND DELIVERANCE.

Acts 16: 25-29.

(25) But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; (26) and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened; and every one's bands were loosed. (27) And the jailor, being roused out of sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. (28) But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. (29) And he called for lights and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas.

Paul and Silas had the power to drive the evil spirit out of the girl and bring joy and peace into her heart. And while they had power to subdue the spirit, they were this time subdued by the same spirit embodied in the magistrate. Specially appointed men were present, called Lictors, whose business it was to carry the beating-rods and do the bidding of the magistrate. These disciples were stripped of their garments and the Roman scourge applied to the backs of Paul and Silas, who were then cast into prison. With bleeding backs, with their feet fast in the stocks, which would prevent them from getting any relief from change of posi-

tion and in the inner prison of total darkness, and no hope of any release on the morrow, they did not forget that Christ, whom they represented, sacrificed and suffered. Again the hand of the state laid itself upon the onward progress of the church. The church had been able to throw off the bondage of Judaism, break down the wall of favoritism, and open the door of the church to the world; she gained the victory when King Herod laid his hand on her to impede her forward march—will the Lord on the Throne now forget his bleeding, singing, crying servants, in bondage to the state? The only weapon in the hour of greatest sorrow, darkest valley, with every avenue for help closed securely against them and no possible hope for escape, was prayer, by which God comes who can unlock prison doors, and deliver the servants, no matter how securely they are bound by human fetters.

These servants knew that Christ Himself, while in the body, made constant use of prayer, had learned of the help given to the Apostles by prayer, when threatened not to teach any more in the name of Jesus, and how the Lord, in answer to prayer made by the group assembled in Mary's house, dispatched an angel and delivered Peter from the cruel hand of Herod; and upon their knowledge and faith they cried to Him who sits on the Throne, who said, "I will never leave nor forsake thee." Do you say, "How could these disciples sing when thus in prison and suffering?" Well, many can not sing when disturbed by a little material opposition around them, but these men's hearts were not disturbed when the lash was applied to their body, and they were thrown into the prison. Their source of joy was where it could not be interfered with, no matter what their external surroundings would be. God answered their prayer in the dead of night, long after the jailer had retired to rest. The prisoners heard them sing praises so loudly that their voices were heard throughout the prison. It must have seemed very strange for the prisoners to hear these unusual

sounds. All at once there was a great earthquake. The foundations of the prison were shaken, and all the doors burst open and the fetters fell off from every prisoner. The disturbance awakened the jailer, who saw that every door was open and was sure that all the prisoners had escaped. He did not understand the cause that produced this calamity, and the shock was so great that he was at the point of committing suicide, when Paul cried out, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." He called for a light, went into the inner dark prison, where just a little while previous he had put Paul and Silas, and fell before them trembling. What a change has been brought about, and what method has been used, and by whose power was it all accomplished?

Paul and Silas were all the time getting into trouble by being so aggressive in Christian service. That is what saves much trouble now, and the result is, jailers are unsaved.

QUESTIONS.

What was the condition of the prisoners?

(1) Their wounds from scourging were undressed. (2) They were in the inner prison, gloomy, oppressive, filthy, in which dangerous criminals were confined. (3) Their feet were fast in stocks. This was an instrument of torture as well as confinement; it was a great bar of wood, with holes in which the feet were fastened wide apart so as to cause pain.

What did they do at midnight?

For what kind of suffering and imprisonment can hearts respond in prayer and song?

Why did they pray and what was the answer?

Compare this release with that of Peter's. 12:7.

Who heard Paul and Silas worshipping?

What did the jailer decide to do?

It was his purpose to commit suicide, as death was the punishment for permitting prisoners to escape.

Why did Paul cry with a loud voice?

He knew the prisoners were all safe, and he spoke a message of the Gospel that is applicable to all men in despair: "Do thyself no harm."

What was the result of the message?

The sinner fell down before the message bearer.

9. CONVERSION OF THE JAILER.

Acts 16: 30-34.

(30) And brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? (31) And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. (32) And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. (33) And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately. (34) And he brought them up into his house, and set food (Gr. a table) before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God (or, having believed God).

The jailer's heart was touched and he immediately brought Paul and Silas out of their loathsome dungeon into some other part of the prison. As he was with these men and felt his need, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Luke is especially interested in the story of the jailer, and we have no account of what became of the other prisoners. Paul answered the jailer by pointing him to faith in Jesus Christ as the only source of saving Power, upon condition that he and those with whom he associated at his house, would believe that salvation would come to their house. The jailer immediately assembled all his people and Paul preached unto them Jesus.

The jailer was a changed man. The people to whom he preached were changed. The Gospel was on the forward march. He took the prisoners and with his own hands washed their stripes to relieve their pain, after which he and all who believed on the Lord Jesus were baptized by the disciples, and thus belonged to the same company represented by the disciples. This baptism took place, not in the prison, but where the jailer had taken the disciples for the purpose of washing their stripes. The jailer's kindness did not stop here, but he took the disciples into his own house and set meat before them. The descriptions would indicate that at this time the night was very near spent, and the prisoners, while still retained in the prison, were not confined to the inner dark cell as before.

QUESTIONS.

Who brought Paul and Silas out?

What did the jailer say to them?

What was the condition of salvation?

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, baptism.
To whom did the Apostles speak the word of the Lord?

To the jailer and all in his house. The word was preached
to all who could believe.

How did they manifest their change of feeling and faith?

Kindlier disposition and a desire to help. They washed
Paul's and Silas' stripes to relieve their suffering.

What did the jailer do for the Apostles?

Gave them the most comfortable place he could find. It,
of course, was connected with the prison.

10. PUBLIC RELEASE OF PAUL AND SILAS.

Acts 16: 35-40.

(35) But when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants (Gr. lictors), saying, Let those men go. (36) And the jailor reported the words to Paul, saying, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore come forth, and go in peace. (37) But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and do they now cast us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and bring us out. (38) And the serjeants reported these words unto the magistrates: and they feared when they heard that they were Romans; (39) and they came and besought them; and when they had brought them out, they asked them to go away from the city. (40) And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted (or, exhorted) them, and departed.

Men like Paul and Silas, being given the power they had, being taken by magistrates, and without any trial delivered into the hands of men to be beaten, if possessed with any conscience, would be somewhat uneasy as to what would be the result. In the morning, influenced either by what they had done to these disciples, cruelly and without a trial, or by what they heard had happened in the prison during the night, these magistrates sent the same men to bring out of prison these disciples whom they had instruct-

ed to be beaten the day before. The jailer informed Paul that the magistrates had given orders to have them released from prison and that they should now go forth in peace. Paul and Silas had already gained a great victory over Satan, and they must have another one before they go forth from the prison. "These magistrates have superseded their authority. We are Roman citizens. They stripped us, beating us publicly, without even giving us a trial. Now do they think they can send us forth privately when all these things were done openly and in public? We demand that these magistrates themselves come and bring us forth from the prison." The men who had beaten the Apostles returned and informed the magistrates that these were Roman citizens who had been treated so cruelly. They feared when they realized their situation, and went to the prison and brought out the Apostles and desired that they should depart out of the city. Before leaving the city they went to the home of Lydia, and having had a farewell meeting with the brethren, they departed into other fields for labor.

QUESTIONS.

Why did the magistrates order the release of the prisoners?

No further explanation is given and no doubt they imprisoned them only as they had been scourged, to gratify the mob. Since the mob ceased they had no further cause to retain them.

Why ask him to "go in peace"?

The magistrates desired to terminate the affair in a secret manner, by driving them abruptly from the prison.

What was the demand made by Paul?

The report of having been scourged and been in prison, would, no doubt, reach other cities and do them harm. And thus the magistrates acknowledged the injustice done them by going in person to the prison and bringing them before the people and giving them an honorable discharge.

What right had they as Roman citizens?

It was a capital crime, under the Roman law, to scourge Paul and Silas as Roman citizens, and therefore they had the power to dictate terms of peace to these magistrates.

Why ask them to leave the city?

Give a review of the work at Philippi.

11. PAUL AND SILAS IN THESSALONICA.

Acts 17:1-9.

(1) Preaching in Thessalonica.—Acts 17:1-4.

(1) Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: (2) and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the scriptures, (3) opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ. (4) And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

The historian had joined the three missionaries at Troas, where Paul had the vision, and receiving the invitation to open missionary work in Macedonia, as they were leaving to go forth in this new field, Luke joined them. In writing about the work he always speaks in the first person, "we," until the company is ready to depart from Philippi to Thessalonica, when he speaks of the company in the third person. Luke and Timothy very probably remained in this place, to take care of the church. Paul, in writing to the Philippian church (Philpp. 1:1), introduces his letter by mentioning the church officials, showing that this church was properly organized, and this may have been the special mission of two of the brethren, while Paul and Silas went into the new fields to do the Master's work.

The disciples traveled along the great Roman road, from Philippi to Amphipolis, thirty-three miles; from Amphipolis to Apollonia, thirty miles; from Apollonia to Thessalonica, about thirty-seven miles, making a distance of about one hundred miles. They traveled until they came to this city, where they found a synagogue of the Jews. This was a flourishing commerical city and made up of a large Jewish population.

For three Sabbaths in the synagogue, Paul reasoned with his countrymen, out of the Old Testament Scriptures.

He showed to them, from the authority of the Scriptures, that Christ the Messiah was set forth, not One who was only to reign and triumph, but as One who was to suffer. Before Paul could help his audience, he must prove by the Scriptures that this same Person whom they believed in could only become King through suffering and death. Therefore Paul said, and proved by the Scriptures, (1) that the Messiah must be a sufferer; (2) that He must rise from the dead; (3) and that this Person whom he holds up before them did suffer, and rise, and was the Messiah of the Scriptures. This was the discussion for three Sabbaths in the synagogue, the result of which was a great revival, and some Jews and many Greeks believed on the Lord.

QUESTIONS.

Describe journey from Philippi to Thessalonica and give distance.

Why not do mission work in the cities through which they pass?

A church being organized at Philippi, evangelistic services might be held from that organized church, and Paul and Silas perhaps desired to go where there was a Jewish synagogue.

What was Paul's custom?

How long did he labor?

The text states that he was here three Sabbaths, working in the synagogue, but this does not indicate the length of his whole stay, as Paul's letter to this church (1 Thess. 1:1 to 2:20) gives the idea of a longer stay and successful work among them.

What was the course of Paul's argument?

The argument from the Old Testament that Jesus is the Christ.

What was the success of the revival?

Were any miracles wrought? 1 Thess. 1:5.

(2) Persecution in Thessalonica.—Acts 17: 5-9.

(5) But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people. (6) And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world (Gr. the inhabited earth) upside down are come hither also; (7) whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. (8) And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. (9) And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

We have now a large body of believers, a congregation with some Jewish believers, but the bulk of the converts were from among the Gentiles. Realizing the amount of work accomplished in this church, there is no doubt that Paul was in communication with the church at Philippi. Said church remembered his labors and in a substantial way assisted him by sending him contributions at different times, which makes it probable that he was at Thessalonica more than three or four weeks. The three or four weeks may refer to his special efforts in the synagogue, after which he turned his attention to the Gentiles, following the same plan adopted on his first missionary journey when at Antioch. This may have been the special charge brought against Jason because he had opened his place for public worship, which brought about the hatred of the Jews, seeing so many Gentiles were accepting the faith. These jealous Jews found many of the lower class, runaway slaves, idle fellows just ready to do any kind of mischief for any amount of compensation. It was but a short time until a mob had gathered—very easy to do in a city like Thessalonica—and the whole city was in an uproar. When they failed to find the disciples at their place of lodging, so they might drag them forth as demons before the public assembly of the citizens, their purpose was known to Jason in time to allow

the disciples to be concealed. Being disappointed, they took him and certain other brethren and dragged them before the rulers of the city, saying, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither." This was the charge they brought against Jason, that he had harbored men "who turned the world upside down"—meaning the Roman empire—by setting up another King, by the name of Jesus. They feared that if this would come to the ears of the emperor he might take away from them their privilege of a free city. These rulers were very different from those whom we met in Philippi, and yet, if Paul and Silas had been brought before the mob, we are not sure just what might have happened. But when they heard the charge against Jason they refused to do any more than simply bind over Jason and those who were with him, so as not to create any further disturbance. By turning over this security, the persons against whom the charge was made were released.

QUESTIONS.

What can you say of the success of the missionary efforts at Thessalonica?

What church was Paul in communication with while laboring at Thessalonica?

Meaning of "lewd fellows"?

Vile, worthless, loafing about the market-place, and ready for any excitement.

Why assault the house of Jason?

He was a Christian, a Jew, whose original name was Joshua.

Give meaning of "turned the world upside down."

This charge bears witness to the power of the Gospel at Thessalonica. The Apostles did indeed arouse the whole world. "World" here means the Roman empire, and by setting up the King, Jesus, whom they preached, it would mean the overthrow of the worldly empire.

Meaning of "taking security"?

Jason and others had pledged their person, or sum of money, that would be forfeited if the missionaries would remain in Thessalonica and cause further disturbance.

What does Paul say as to this security? 9, cf. 1 Thess. 2:7, 18; 3:10.

12. FOUNDING OF CHURCH IN BEREÆ.

Acts 17: 10-14.

(10) And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berœa: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. (11) Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. (12) Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable estate, and of men, not a few. (13) But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was proclaimed of Paul at Berœa also, they came thither likewise, stirring up and troubling the multitudes. (14) And then immediately the brethren sent forth Paul to go as far as to the sea: and Silas and Timothy abode there still.

Paul and Silas did not suffer the same bodily persecution as in Philippi, yet they were humiliated in the manner of departure from Thessalonica. If they would insist on remaining it would involve Jason and his brethren in the forfeiture of their security and likely bring personal violence to themselves. In order not to cause any further trouble they departed at night, a distance of about fifty miles further west, to Berea, on the same Roman road. Immediately upon their arrival they entered the synagogue of the Jews to continue the exposition of the Old Testament Scriptures. However, they found a different class of Jews to instruct, because they themselves were daily inquirers in order to be established in the truth.

It is always an inspiration, to any one who expounds the Scripture, to know that those whom he teaches are comparing his teaching with the Word itself. The result of this Bible teaching was that many Jews and Greeks were converted, and a large and flourishing church was formed. In the process of such a revival, in the conversion of many Jews and Greeks, we would be disappointed if Satan would not soon send forth his opposers.

These Jews who brought trouble in Thessalonica had knowledge of the success of the Apostles, and we find them

on hand to stir up the people. When opposition became so bitter that it was dangerous for Paul to continue here, some of the brethren of Berea accompanied him when he departed, but Silas remained at Berea. If Timothy assisted the church for a while at Philippi, he joined Silas in continued missionary efforts in the church at Berea.

QUESTIONS.

Where is Berea?

This city was about sixty miles southwest of Thessalonica, and had a population now of from fifteen to twenty thousand. Why call Bereans "noble-minded"?

They were ready to hear the truth and sufficiently interested to search the Scriptures, to learn for themselves if the Apostles preached the truth.

To what is their obedience ascribed?

It was the obedience to the preaching and studying of the Word that resulted in the conversion of the Bereans.

What was the motive of the pursuers from Thessalonica?

What is said of Silas and Timothy when Paul had to leave?

13. PAUL BROUGHT TO ATHENS, AND FIRST WORK.

Acts 17:15-21.

(15) But they that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timothy that they should come to him with all speed, they departed.

(16) Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols. (17) So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with them that met him. (18) And certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, What would this babbler say? others, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange (or, foreign divinities) gods (Gr. demons): because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. (19) And they took hold of him and brought him unto the Areopagus (or, the hill of Mars), saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee? (20) For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (21) [Now all the Athenians

and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else (or, had leisure for nothing else), but either to tell or to hear some new thing.]

Three great missionary centers were now established, and persons had been left to care for the churches. As he left Berea, in company with some of the noble brethren, they accompanied him all the way from Berea to Athens. After arriving at Athens, Paul gave instructions that, upon their return to Berea, a pressing invitation should be given Silas and Timothy to join him at Athens, since he is left there alone. Paul, having to seek safety by flight, made a journey of about three hundred miles. This was the distance between him and his enemies that had been following him. He was now in this classic city, awaiting the arrival of his companions in missionary work. This gave him an opportunity to learn the religious condition of the city. He was deeply moved as he found this great city wholly given to idolatry. All the public places were full of idols. Everywhere he would go he was met with these idolatrous tendencies. It was said that there were more idols than men in Athens.

He could not restrain himself any longer, without making an effort to relieve these people from darkness. He reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue, and with the Jewish proselytes concerning their obligations to Jesus as the Living Savior—that they ought to be true to Him as Savior of the world and meet their responsibilities as missionaries in a city given wholly to heathenism. He also preached Christ in the market-place, where many people were gathered, many of whom were strangers, persons from all over the world who had come to study at this great intellectual center.

Paul was creating some interest at these different points by his preaching, and attracted the attention of the Epicureans and Stoics, men who thought that there was no God, or that the world was God; that it was man's chief

business to seek what was pleasant, and to retain an undisturbed calmness of mind in all circumstances. Paul had taught that the final goal of human hopes was resurrection of the dead to Life Everlasting. These philosophers denied that there would be any conscious existence after death. They held that the soul, like the body, was mortal and that death annihilated both. They spoke of Paul as the "bab-bler," "seed-picker," "picking up news and eager to retail it." Having heard the resurrection of Jesus preached, many were gathered who were curious to know what Paul would say further, and others wanted to know the truth, and so he was invited to speak at Mars' Hill, an eminence of their city where the highest tribunal held its meeting. Here he had a representative meeting of philosophers, leading citizens, a large number of persons who spent their time in gossiping, anxious to tell or hear something real new. They would have an opportunity to hear him fully concerning this new doctrine.

QUESTIONS.

Where did the guides take Paul?

What command did they receive from Paul when they departed?

Silas and Timothy had remained in Macedonia, to look after the church. Paul did not wish to be alone, and desired fellow-laborers who might pray, testify, and be in company with him.

What did Paul do while waiting at Athens?

He disputed in the synagogue and market-place with Jews and proselytes.

Did Timothy come to him while at Athens?

Luke does not mention Timothy and Silas until they meet with him at Corinth (18: 5). Paul, in writing to the Thessalonian church (1 Thess. 2: 17 to 3: 2), speaks of Timothy having come to meet him at Athens; he received a commission from Paul to the churches at Macedonia and then came to Paul again while he was at Corinth. Luke had remained at Philippi, which may be the cause for the omission of the history of Timothy's visit to Paul at Athens.

What stirred Paul's spirit?

Who were the Epicureans and Stoics?

The Epicureans were the materialists of the ancient world.

They sought relief from life's sorrows in the steady pursuit of its pleasures. The Stoics taught that the true philosophy of life was a total indifference to both the sorrows and pleasures of the world.

Describe the Areopagus.

Areopagus was the Greek name for the hill. It was called Mars' Hill, on account of the legend that the god Mars had been tried there. It was a great rocky elevation, about seventy-five feet above the plain. Here the religious courts of Athens had been held for ages.

14. PAUL'S SERMON TO THE ATHENIANS.

Acts 17: 22-31.

(1) Introduction.—Acts 17: 22-23.

(22) And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious (or, somewhat superstitious). (23) For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, To an Unknown God. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you.

The Apostle Paul was now before the people to whom he was to unfold this new doctrine. He was to speak to the philosophers, who claimed that they had risen above the religion of the ignorant multitude, and had reached the knowledge of the true God. But at this time they had reached only the knowledge of the many different kinds of religion which had appealed to them. He addressed his hearers in language to which their ears were accustomed, "Ye men of Athens." The charge he brought against them was not that of superstition, but he said to the Athenians that they were a very religious people and given to the worship of many deities. As an example of this: "As I was passing along I beheld your devotion, and I found an altar with this inscription, To the Unknown God." The fact that they had an altar with this inscription was, in Paul's mind, an admission on the part of these philosophers that they were really ignorant of the true God, and that it would be possible for them to attain to this true knowledge in his presentation of God to them.

QUESTIONS.

Why say you are too superstitious?

Observe the object of your worship.

Paul's purpose was to call attention to their religious nature, for objects of worship were on every side.

Give meaning of "As I passed by and beheld your devotions."

What was the inscription he noticed on one of their altars?

What use did he make of this?

Give meaning of "Ye ignorantly worshiped."

Whom, therefore, ye worshiped, not knowing Him, Him declare I unto you. It was Paul's object to declare Him whom the altar represented and for whom they were seeking.

(2) God's Relation to All Things.—Acts 17:24-28.

a. To Material Universe.—Acts 17:24.

(24) The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples (or sanctuaries) made with hands.

"God is a Person, and I declare Him unto you as a Person who made the world, and everything that is in the world." This bold statement was in direct opposition to the Epicureans and Stoics. As Lord of Heaven and earth, He cannot dwell in temples fashioned by the hands of man, as man himself is included in the opening statement of this verse.

QUESTIONS.

Why does Paul speak of God as the Creator of the world?

These philosophers did not believe that the world was created by God, but founded by an accidental concourse of atoms.

Of what is He the Lord?

Where does God dwell?

In the temple of man's heart he dwelleth by His Holy Spirit.

b. To Men.—Acts 17:25-28.

(25) Neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; (26) and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on

all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; (27) that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: (28) for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said,

For we are also his offspring.

God is not confined to any kind of building made with man's hands. Neither can He be worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything. He meant to say to these philosophers that the Divine Nature is so complete and sufficient as not to need anything from us. And while that is true, His relation to us is one of beneficence. He is a universal Giver. He is not only the One that creates but preserves. God is the Creator and hath made all nations of one blood. These philosophers believed that the different races of men were brought into existence by the different gods that they worshiped. Not only has God created all these nations by Himself, from one blood, but He is the Governor over these nations that He has thus created. He fixes their national bounds and the time of their existence, but not for national glory, and one independent of the other, but for the promotion of good, the development of the higher, "that they should seek the Lord," that in doing this they might search after the highest and would not be disappointed but find Him. He is right in the midst of all of it, "because in Him we live, and move and have our being." Paul continued this beautiful thought by quoting from their own poets, to show that the statement of the poets is against their teaching. The poets have more wisdom than philosophers. "For we are His offspring," showing that man in his own nature is created in the image of God.

QUESTIONS.

Why say "Neither is worshiped with men's hands"?

Idols are made and worshiped that way, but God is worshiped by men's hearts.

Give meaning of statement, "Made of one blood all nations."

God has made from one ancestor or family all nations of men.

Who appoints the times and sets the bounds?

God teaches us that the affairs of all the nations are under His control.

What is said of God's nearness to all of us?

What quotation did he make from Greek poets?

Paul is pleased to find in their own Greek writings a corroboration of his doctrine, that God is our Creator and Father. At least two of them have stated that "We are also His offspring" (Aratus and Cleanthes).

(3) God's Nature.—Acts 17: 29.

(29) Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man.

If it is a fact that God is the Creator of all things, that the Lord dwells in heaven and on earth, it would be unwise even to think of making a building with hands to contain the Creator. Temple worship is not sufficient to meet the requirements of Him who has created man, and if man is His offspring, then man must be created in His image; then it is not intelligent even to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver, or stone, fashioned by man's hands. It must be a displeasure even for God to look upon His offspring making these material things by which to represent Him.

"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many; yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him" (1 Cor. 8: 5-6).

QUESTIONS.

Whose offspring did God affirm men to be?

If we are the offspring of God, it is absurd to think that man could carve out God, or that God could reside in a block of wood, or stone hewn out by man.

In whose image is man created?

Is it natural for man to search for something to worship?

(4) God's Moral Government of Men.—Acts 17:30-31.

(30) The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: (31) inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world (Gr. the inhabited earth) in righteousness by (Gr. in) the man (or, a man) whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

If we are intelligent, moral, rational beings, then we are God's offspring, and ought to feel after God and no longer grope in darkness. In the past God overlooked the ignorance about Himself, but we have come to a time in the history of the world when He commands all men to repent. This idolatry is taking up your time and thought, and must be set aside for the worship of the true God. God has appointed a day for judgment and He will hold everyone accountable to whom He has given the Light by nature and revelation, who worships anything else but the true God. We no longer doubt the resurrection. He has given proof of it, in that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, and God the Father will hold everyone accountable who fails to repent and accept Jesus Christ as his Savior.

QUESTIONS.

Give meaning of "times of this ignorance God winked at."

The true rendering is "The times of this ignorance God overlooked." The sins committed in ignorance are different from those committed in light and conscience. He was willing to pass this by, because He had not fully revealed Himself unto them.

What was their immediate duty?

They must repent, turn from their sins, and live as children of the known God.

Why were they to repent immediately?

Because God will call all men to judgment.

What was the assurance that He gave unto all men?

15. EFFECT OF THE SERMON.

Acts 17: 32-34.

(32) Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again. (33) Thus Paul went out from among them. (34) But certain men clave unto him, and believed: among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Paul had carefully uncovered, for these people, the sin of idolatry, and followed it with a message for the heart. The message had the same effect upon the hearers as it does at the present time in many congregations. Some, when they heard the message, mocked. The very idea of the resurrection was one to be laughed at. Others were not ready to accept the message, but while they may have believed the truth, were not ready to decide for the truth. But there were others in the congregation whose hearts the Lord opened as the truth was spoken by the Apostle. Among those that believed were the following: Dionysius, a very prominent man, one of the judges of the Areopagus, and Damaris, though it was unusual for a woman to be found in the audience of the philosophers. From the statement here we would conclude that the result of the missionary efforts in this place was the conversion of but a small number of men and women.

QUESTIONS.

Why mock at the resurrection?

Paul's doctrine was contrary to their philosophy and lives. The easiest way to escape their teaching was to sneer at him. Why did some delay their decision?

They were like many sinners now, who hear and know the truth, and put off their decision until some other time. Give names of prominent persons who believed.

Dionysius, a member of the court of Mars, according to Eusebius, afterwards became the bishop of the church at Athens, and died a martyr. Nothing more is known of Damaris, but she must have been a woman of distinction and power.

16. PAUL'S MINISTRY IN CORINTH.—Acts 18: 1-17.

(1) His Method of Work.—Acts 18: 1-4.

(1) After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth. (2) And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them; (3) and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tentmakers. (4) And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded (Gr. sought to persuade) Jews and Greeks.

Paul was through with his mission work at Athens. His stay in Athens was determined by the expectation of the immediate arrival of Silas and Timothy. (Acts 17: 16.) Luke makes no mention of their having visited him while at Athens. The only information we have we get from the Epistle that Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church, in which he indicates that Timothy visited him before his departure from Athens, but Paul at once sent him back to the church in Thessalonica to establish the Christians and to comfort them in the faith (1 Thess. 3: 1-2). We do not know of any brethren accompanying Paul as he left Athens to travel a distance of about forty-five miles to the city of Corinth.

Here he found a family skilled in tent making, which trade he had learned, and for this reason made his abode with them and worked at his trade to supply his temporal necessities. This family recently had come from Italy, having been expelled from Rome by the Emperor Claudius. At Corinth this family had opened a place for making tents, and Paul joined them because of their trade and not because they were believers. We are not informed when they became Christians. They may have united with the church while Paul was preaching at Corinth. We know that some persons were present from Pontus on the Day of Pentecost, and they might have been present themselves or received messages from some who had been present, which prepared

them to be such favorable companions for Paul in his revival efforts at Corinth. This family was a great inspiration to Paul in his ministry, and he mentioned them in different ones of his Epistles, that their labors of love should not go unrewarded by the Christians in the different churches to whom he was writing. While Paul was laboring during the week to supply his temporal necessities, he gave his Sabbath to the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures, teaching the Jews and Greeks, who assembled in the synagogue. Paul going forth as a pioneer missionary, opening missionary points, his work was much hindered because he had to give so much of his time to manual labor for temporal necessities. While he did this that the work might go on, yet he clearly taught in his letters that missionary work and religious teaching should not be hindered in organized churches for the same reason.

QUESTIONS.

What was Paul's purpose in staying at Athens? and was he disappointed?

Tell about Athens and Corinth.

Athens was the seat of learning. People from different parts of the world gathered here for great intellectual training. Corinth was westward from Athens, about forty miles, and was called the city of business men. It contained a population of about 400,000. It was the capital of the Province of Achaia. The city was built on a narrow isthmus, which joins the southern peninsula of Greece. It had two harbors, the eastern, called Cenchrea; the western, called the Gulf of Lepanto, which connected it with Italy.

Why did Paul probably go to Corinth?

We must remember that he was following the leadings of the Holy Spirit. It became a good center from which the Gospel was diffused in all directions.

What was his first work in the city?

Who were his companions in labor?

Aquila and Priscilla were Roman names, and it was common for Jews to assume such names when they lived outside of Palestine. These persons are always mentioned together, and are known as a happy family and an example of harmony and sympathy in the Christian life.

Why were Jews commanded to leave Rome?

The decree was made about A. D. 52, on account of a revolt in Judea, and may have been caused at Rome by the jealousy of the Jews of the progress of Christianity.

Why did Paul work and not ask support from the church?

1 Cor. 9: 6-15; 2 Cor. 11: 6-10.

During his first efforts at Corinth he could not appeal to the church because he was just starting it, and later, during his ministry here, he received some support from collections received from some other churches he had established.

This congregation was made up of what class of people?

(2) Re-enforcement from Macedonia.—Acts 18: 5-8.

(5) But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. (6) And when they opposed themselves and blasphemed (or, railed), he shook out his raiment and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. (7) And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. (8) And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord (Gr. believed the Lord) with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

While Paul was a strong Christian man, a great missionary, yet when his companions arrived it inspired him with new life and energy for his work at Corinth. Timothy, who had performed his mission at Thessalonica, and Silas, who had remained at Berea, met and made this journey together to assist Paul again in some of his church work at this point. As Paul continued to preach Jesus to the Jews and Greeks in their synagogue, the same results followed as in the former cities where he labored in the synagogue. Jews and Greeks united with the church. Persons of good influence, from Paul's own account (1 Cor. 1: 14-16)—Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas, which he himself baptized—united with the church during his labors at the synagogue. Here the usual opposition arose when some of the Jews left their synagogue worship and accepted Christ whom Paul preached. Paul saw more

clearly the finger of God directing him and aiding him to see that he was not only an Apostle to the Gentiles, but must not let anything stand in the way of preaching the Gospel to them. He shook his raiment and declared to them that he was clean from the blood of all men, and left the synagogue and established a preaching place in the house of Justus, right by the synagogue. We do not know how long he was permitted to hold services in the synagogue, but when he transferred his place of meeting to the man's house he must have had a goodly number of baptized converts.

QUESTIONS.

Where had he left Silas and Timothy?

What encouragement did he receive from their report?

He received good news from the churches where he labored, and the Philippian church sent him aid, which showed their love and sympathy.

Why was Paul pressed in the spirit?

The love of Christ constrained him and urged him on. He was stimulated to greater activity by the arrival of his co-laborers.

What is the difference between Paul's preaching at Athens and at Corinth?

In the Athenian discourse it was more with excellency of speech and with hardly an evangelistic note. But in Corinth he preached in a different manner, as he says (1 Cor. 2:1), "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech (I learned at Athens that would not do), or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God, for I determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

What did the Jews do when the revival was in progress?

What was Paul's conclusion?

He shook his raiment, a sign that he was relieved from all responsibility for their failure to be saved.

With what people did he labor and where did he preach after this?

In the house of Justus. He was a proselyte and worshiped God, but was not a born Jew.

What was Paul's purpose in choosing a place of worship so near the synagogue?

How many converts did Paul baptize, and name them?

(3) Paul's Vision.—Acts 18:9-11.

(9) And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: (10) for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city. (11) And he dwelt there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

The Apostle had not altogether given up his interest in his kinsmen according to the flesh. He was nigh the synagogue, hoping that the preaching of the Gospel might attract some and they might be saved (Acts 18:7). Paul, by a vision in the night, received the approval of the Lord, who spoke to him for the purpose of encouraging him to go forward in boldness, assuring him that the Lord would be with him, and no one would be able to lay his hands on him and harm him. He showed great interest in his manifestation here, because at this place He had many people who ought to know about Him through Paul's preaching. This was the right time for the preacher's encouragement. In all other places Paul's work was hindered by persecution or by being driven out of the town, but here the Lord came and said to Paul, "This can not be here, your missionary efforts must be continued." And he remained here about eighteen months.

It was sometime during the beginning of this ministry, shortly after the visit of Silas and Timothy, that the Apostle wrote his first letter—sometime during A. D. 53. He had received word by Timothy concerning the converts at Thessalonica, that the church there had increased in faith and charity, and had not forgotten Paul, and were very anxious to see him. And while making this favorable report he had learned, during his visit at Thessalonica, that a difference of opinion prevailed in the church about the benefits received at Christ's second coming, between those who should be alive and those who had fallen asleep. It being impossible for him to visit the church, he wrote this first letter, in which he encouraged them by many exhortations and en-

deavored to correct the false impressions, which seemed to have been left from his teaching regarding the benefits received by those who had fallen asleep and those who may still be living at Christ's second coming.

QUESTIONS.

When did Paul have this vision, and what was its purpose?

What encouragement did the Lord give him?

That he was to speak boldly and that He would see that no one would molest him.

What did the Lord say was the purpose of His encouragement?

"I have much people in this city." God never forgets His people and points to His laborers the place for service.

How long did he remain in Corinth and what did he do?

He was here eighteen months. While here, he established a flourishing church. Soon after his arrival he wrote his first letter to the Thessalonian church. This letter did not correct the difficulty in the church to which it was written. It would appear that some parties in the church pretended to have received information from Paul in some other letter, or forged a letter in his name, which information disturbed the minds of the brethren still more regarding the coming of the Day of the Lord. In order to correct the errors and to remove the cause, Paul wrote the second letter, in which he showed that the coming of the day should be preceded by a great apostasy, and the revealing of the son of perdition (2 Thess. 2:3). In order to prevent further trouble concerning false impressions, using him for authority for false opinions and practices, which were not authorized by him, Paul wrote the salutation to the second Epistle, as well as to all other Epistles, with his own hand. Written some time in A. D. 54.

(4) Paul Before the Civil Authorities.—Acts 18:12-17.

(12) But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment-seat, (13) saying, This man persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. (14) But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If indeed it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villany, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: (15) but if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; I am not minded to be a judge of these matters. (16) And he drove them from the judgment-seat. (17) And they all laid hold on Sosthenes, the

ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of these things.

The Lord had promised Paul to care for him, and that he should go forward and preach to the many people that He had in that place and He would see that no one would harm him. Here we have another example to show us that the Lord does not forget His servants and cares for them.

Corinth was a great Greek city of the Roman period. The pro-consul Gallio was a brother of the famous Seneca. The Jews no doubt thought at the appointment of this new deputy they would have an opportunity to get a hearing and receive some favor from him. Therefore they made a charge against Paul and brought him to the judgment-seat. The charge was that Paul was teaching a religion and teaching men to worship God contrary to law. The deputy refused to examine into the complaint. Paul was quite ready to meet the charge the Jews had made against him, but Gallio declined to hear him, saying to the persons who brought the charge, "If it were a matter of a civil or criminal offense, I should take time to listen to it. But it is a mere matter of names and therefore I will have nothing to do with it." How differently he treated the charge against Paul than did the magistrates of Philippi and Thessalonica. Gallio bade these Jews to depart at once, but there was some feeling expressed here by the Greeks who took the rumor of the synagogue and fell upon him and beat him in the presence of Gallio, who did not concern himself about the matter, and perhaps felt that Sosthenes deserved punishment for bringing a trivial matter of this kind to the court.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Gallio?

He was the proconsul of Achaia.

What was the difference between the charge made against Paul at Corinth and at Philippi and Thessalonica?

The charge at Corinth was made by the Jews in their own name, and with reference to their own law, while at the other two places the charge was preferred by Greeks with reference to the Roman law.

Why did Gallio dismiss the case?

Because he saw that it was simply a discussion with regard to their own law and no violation of the Roman law.

How did he deal with the accusers?

Who beat Sosthenes and why?

He was appointed ruler of the synagogue by the Jews and no doubt was the strong opposer of Paul's missionary work. Instead of securing the favor of the court, he himself received the punishment that he had planned for another.

Why say "Gallio cared for none of those things"?

While the magistrate could have interfered, yet he was willing to have him get the punishment he had planned for another.

17. RETURN OF PAUL THROUGH EPHESUS AND JERUSALEM TO ANTIOCH.

Acts 18: 18-22.

(18) And Paul, having tarried after this yet many days, took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila: having shorn his head in Cenchreæ; for he had a vow. (19) And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. (20) And when they asked him to abide a longer time, he consented not; (21) but taking his leave of them, and saying, I will return again unto you if God will, he set sail from Ephesus.

(22) And when he had landed at Cæsarea, he went up and saluted the church, and went down to Antioch.

Paul's safety was secured and he continued his labor there for a good while. This period, "a good while," may be concluded in the eighteen months referred to before.

The time had come for him to leave the church in the hands of other leaders. This is the last place we have mention made of Silas, and he may have remained here to assist other leaders to carry forward the church work. During the missionary efforts at Corinth some church work may have been done at Cenchrea, because we find mention of a church at this place later. Arriving at this place, the time had just expired of the vow that he had taken, during which time he had permitted his hair to grow and at the close the

hair was to be shorn, which is customary, as writers tell us, in turban-wearing nations. This could not have been the Nazarite vow, because at the expiration of that vow the hair was cut off at the temple in Jerusalem and burned in the fire of the altar (Num. 6: 13-18).

Aquila and Priscilla, whom he had met on his arrival at Corinth, and who were especially helpful in his missionary labors during these eighteen months, accompanied him as he went on his journey. When they arrived at Ephesus, they remained there, and it may be possible that Timothy accompanied Paul to this place, from the fact that we find him with Paul in Ephesus on the third missionary journey (Acts 19:22). Before leaving Ephesus, Paul visited the synagogue and preached Christ. The people insisted on Paul remaining longer but they could not persuade him. He bade them farewell, giving his reason for his haste that he must keep the coming feast at Jerusalem. But, if it were God's will, he would return to them again. He left Ephesus and sailed for Cæsarea, and then going up to Jerusalem, saluted the church. Then he went down to Antioch, and no doubt gave a full report to the missionary church of his second missionary journey from A. D. 50 to 54.

QUESTIONS.

Where is Cenchrea?

What was done at this place?

What happened at Ephesus?

What effect had his preaching at Ephesus?

What reason did he give for not remaining longer?

It was about the time of one of the three feasts at Jerusalem, and Paul, in order to attend said feast, had to continue his journey at once to Jerusalem.

Where is Cæsarea?

Trace second missionary journey, and locate all the events in the order in which they occurred.

Give the number and purpose of Paul's visits to Jerusalem.

His first, 9:26; second, 11:30; third, 15:4; fourth, 18:22.

Section IV. Paul's Third Missionary Journey.**Acts 18: 23 to 21: 17.****1. SECOND VISIT TO GALATIA AND PHRYGIA.****Acts 18: 23.**

(23) And having spent some time there, he departed, and went through the region of Galatia, and Phrygia, in order, establishing all the disciples.

After the Apostle had made his report to the church, covering a period of nearly four years, during which he traveled a good many hundred miles, and remembering the promise he had left with his workers in different churches, he began his third missionary journey.

Of the first part of this journey we have very little information. He tells us that he went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. We are sure that the churches in Galatia were planted on the second journey, and on this journey he visited them. He passed over this part of his journey very hurriedly in order to reach Ephesus, where he had preached in the synagogue, and on a pressing invitation to remain, promised the people to return. Here also he had left Aquila and Priscilla, and we find at this place Timothy with him again.

QUESTIONS.

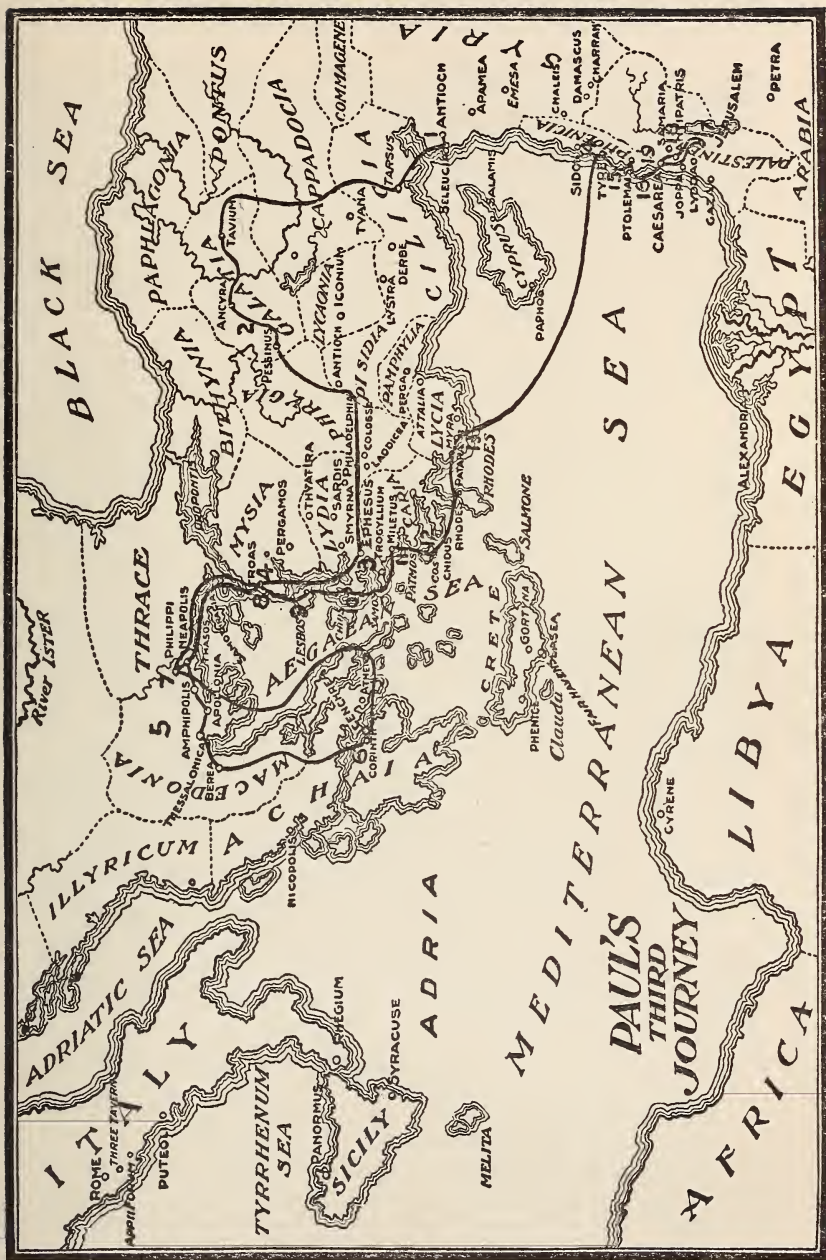
How long was Paul at Antioch?

Name the churches he visited and for what purpose.

Locate the churches and who organized them.

2. APOLLOS AT EPHESUS AND ACHAIA.**Acts 18: 24-28.**

(24) Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man (or, a learned man), came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the scriptures. (25) This man had been instructed (Gr. taught by word of mouth) in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught accurately the things



concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John: (26) and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately. (27) And when he was minded to pass over into Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him: and when he was come, he helped them much that had believed through grace (or, helped much through grace them that had believed); (28) for he powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, showing (or, showing publicly) by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

When Paul had arrived at Ephesus he became acquainted with a Jew named Apollos, who was born at Alexandria. He was a thorough Old Testament student. He knew that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, and was very eloquent and able to persuade others, and he preached very earnestly and boldly in the synagogue, things concerning Jesus. But he had learned about Jesus only through the word of John the Baptist.

Aquila and Priscilla, who had been under Paul's instruction a long time, gave Apollos private lessons, showing him the whole Gospel. After having this fuller teaching and realizing his failure in his former teaching, he left Ephesus and went into other fields to expound the way of God more perfectly, as set forth by his instructors, Aquila and Priscilla. When he was about to go forth into this new field of labor, the brethren wrote a letter to the church, exhorting the disciples to receive him who would be a very valuable help in their church. Upon his arrival Apollos, being an eloquent man, and well versed in the Old Testament, began to speak publicly, proving by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Apollos and state his qualifications?

What is said about him as a preacher at Ephesus?

By whom was he instructed as to the baptism of Jesus?

He was taught the Gospel more fully by Aquila and Priscilla.

Why write to the disciples at Achaia?

It was a letter of commendation that they might receive him into Christian fellowship.

Why desire to go to a new field to work?

It would be more difficult for him to make a success at Ephesus where the work that he had done had to be corrected, and in the new field he could work among the people who would not be prejudiced.

What did he do upon his arrival at Achaia?

3. THE NEW PENTECOST AT EPHESUS.

Acts 19: 1-7.

(1) And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples: (2) and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given (or, there is a Holy Spirit). (3) And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism. (4) And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus. (5) And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. (6) And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. (7) And they were in all about twelve men.

On the former missionary journey the Apostle Paul had in mind to do missionary work in Asia Minor. But the Holy Spirit had other plans for him and he went into Europe. It seems that now the way was opened for him to establish the work he had in his mind and fulfill the promise he had made to the brethren that he would return to them speedily. At the time that Paul returned to Ephesus, Apollos, having been properly instructed, was doing acceptable work for the church at Corinth. This is the last account we have of Apollos. It is altogether probable that Paul took up his abode with Aquila and Priscilla, who were so faithful while at Corinth and accompanied him to Ephesus, and were still at Ephesus upon his return (1 Cor. 16: 19). Paul had

associated with them also because they worked at the same trade, and we find him here ministering with his own hands for his own necessity and also to them that were with him (Acts 20:34). At this place he staid longer than at any other point in his missionary labors. It embraced a period of about three years. Among his companions while at Ephesus, we find Aquila, Priscilla, Timothy, Erastus, Gaius and Aristarchus, and Sosthenes. Sosthenes seemed to have been the chief opposer at Corinth, and in writing his first letter to the Corinthian church he speaks of him as a Christian brother. Soon after Paul's arrival at Ephesus, while associating with some of the brethren, he no doubt felt there was something radically wrong in their religious life. He immediately inquired into the difficulty; he asked these brethren, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" Upon which they informed Paul that they did not as much as know there was a Holy Spirit, let alone having Him. They were instructed by one who was not properly informed, and they knew of John's baptism but not of the baptism of Jesus. Those that were baptized by John for repentance were to receive Jesus, for whom John was opening the way. But since then Jesus had come and they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, that their sins might be remitted and they might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Then were these twelve men rebaptized, and when Paul laid his hands upon them, received the Holy Spirit and commenced to speak with new tongues and prophesy. Thus we have four different times when the Holy Spirit was given in a special way to believers, and they spoke with new tongues. (1) After the waiting of the one hundred and twenty for ten days, Pentecost was at hand, they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke with new tongues. These were all Jews and there was no laying on of hands. (2) About five years later, at the opening of missionary work in Samaria, many received baptism at the hands of Philip, but

not until Peter and John, the Apostles, laid hands on them did they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing said about these speaking in tongues and prophesying. (3) When Peter, by special revelation, was sent to open the door to the Gentile world, while he was preaching to Cornelius and his household, the Holy Spirit fell upon them and they spoke with new tongues and praised God. (4) Here in our text we have the last case. Paul here laid his hands upon these twelve men, as an Apostle of the Gentiles, just as Peter and John, the Apostles of the Jews, laid hands upon the Samaritans, and all that were baptized by Philip received the gift of the Holy Spirit. No doubt Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, should be named as receiving Holy Spirit baptism at conversion.

The Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles, all received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. We had only twelve Apostles, and then Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, but there were no further appointments. When Paul asked the question about receiving the Holy Spirit, he did not mean, as the text implies, whether the Holy Spirit had given them new power at different times in their religious experiences. His inquiry was whether they received the Holy Spirit when baptized. The Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost. He has been here ever since. He is ready to manifest Himself more fully in every believer who is a faithful and obedient student under the best and greatest of all Teachers.

QUESTIONS.

Where was Paul while Apollos was at Ephesus?

He was visiting the churches in Galatia and Phrygia.

Where was Apollos when Paul reached Ephesus?

Why did he ask the disciples the question about receiving the Holy Spirit?

What was the second question Paul asked them and what was their answer?

Were all of John's disciples rebaptized?

Only those who had been baptized after it ceased to be ad-

ministered by Divine authority. This is the last mention made of John the Baptist in the New Testament. Here at length he fully gives place to Christ.

Give the four instances of the miraculous bestowment of the Spirit.

4. PAUL PREACHING AT EPHESUS.—Acts 19: 8-12.

(1) Three Months in the Jewish Synagogue.—Acts 19: 8-9.

(8) And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God. (9) But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

John's ministry was now set aside as not being able to give full knowledge of the truth as required by the church at this age, as that ministry could not promise the Holy Spirit. It was now settled that the ministry of Jesus Christ was to be preached and upon its acceptance the Holy Spirit would be received. This equipment Paul proved to be the only way to show to those about us that our instruction is in harmony with the Book. After having these Christians fully established in faith and power, he entered the synagogue and spoke boldly to the people concerning the things taught in the Scriptures about the kingdom of God. These were his regular evangelistic sermons, and for three months he preached to these people and the Gospel had the same effect as in the other synagogues where he preached. Some of the hearers' hearts were touched and believed in Jesus, others became harder, and believed not, and went out before the multitude and stirred up the people. They made every effort to prejudice the people against Paul and thus arrest the progress of his evangelistic efforts. Paul followed the same course he adopted in Corinth and formed a Christian church separate from the synagogue, and arranged with one Tyrannus to hold services in one of his large buildings.

QUESTIONS.

When had Paul preached in this synagogue before? and what did they say to him when he left? 8, cf. 18:20.

What is meant by "speak boldly"?

How were Paul and his fellow-laborers supported? 20:34-35.

What was the result of the preaching in the synagogue?

It had the effect of saving of souls and the hardening of sinners.

What did Paul decide to do because of opposition?

He ceased to take part in services in the public synagogue.

(2) Two Years in the School Room of Tyrannus.

Acts 19: 10-12.

(10) And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. (11) And God wrought special miracles (Gr. powers) by the hands of Paul: (12) insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out.

The time had arrived for the special evangelistic labors in Asia. For two years the Apostle and his associates labored from Ephesus as a center, and the people, both Jews and Greeks, who dwelt in Asia, heard the Word of the Lord. These earnest, faithful disciples of the Master no doubt made wide circuits from Ephesus and probably the seven churches, which John mentions in the Book of Revelation, were founded during this period. Luke speaks not only of this public work, but of private work that was done from house to house during the ministry of these two years (20:20).

His inspiring message all the time contained repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (20:21). Ephesus was a city known as the stronghold of Satan. It contained many ways of leading the people away from the true God to idols made with hands. These idols were made to suit the wicked condition of the people; people who worship the true God must repent and form

their lives by a higher Standard. It is the change of the person, not the God, which elevates people, inspires them with new ideals and heavenly purposes. In order to meet the false belief in Ephesus that these gods had some divine power, God gave to His servant, Paul, miraculous power as testimony to His preaching and the overthrow of the false teaching concerning the heathen gods. Persons possessed with evil spirits, and who were sick, touched with handkerchiefs or aprons, which had come in touch with Paul's power, were healed. God here answered the faith of these people as he answered the woman's faith who touched the hem of His garment.

QUESTIONS.

Who was with Paul at this new place of worship?

Who was Tyrannus and why did Paul go there?

This is the only information we have of him. He no doubt was the founder of the school which still bore his name, which building Paul hired for a preaching place. Many of the heathen would attend here who would not go into the synagogue.

How long was Paul at Ephesus?

In his farewell address (20:31) the time is given as three years. Some time was spent at Ephesus before he preached the three months in the synagogue, and he may have labored for some time after the information in ver. 20, thus making up the stated time.

Why say "special miracles"?

These were uncommon, specially given to overcome the evil influence that now prevailed in Ephesus.

Why use the articles of dress?

At this time there was a great crowd attending the public gatherings of Paul, and it was more convenient to bring these articles into contact with the sick than to have them all brought to the Apostles.

5. SUPPRESSION OF WITCHCRAFT.

Acts 19: 13-20.

(1) Satan Disciplines His Own.—Acts 19: 13-18.

(13) But certain also of the strolling Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name over them that had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. (14) And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, who did this. (15) And the evil spirit answered and said unto them, Jesus I know (or, recognize), and Paul I know; but who are ye? (16) And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and mastered both of them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. (17) And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt at Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. (18) Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds.

When God gives special power to His children, Satan always puts up some of his as imitators. When God led His people through the Red Sea, Satan had Pharaoh and his host try to do the same thing, but their imitation was fully revealed in their failure to get across. Here the extraordinary power of Paul incited disreputable Jews to use the name of Jesus, to show their power over a demoniac. They were very careful in using their formula; in order that they might not make any mistake they would say, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." Among others who used this formula were the seven sons of Sceva, a Jew. These exorcists pretended to possess the power to drive out demons by this formula, so a few of them put this matter to a test, and they took a man possessed with a demon, into a room. Perhaps they were anxious to have the matter secret, so that if they would fail, the matter would be unknown to the people; but when they used this formula, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches," the demoniac answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" The man with the superhuman strength of the demon, leaped upon them, and overcame these two men,

so that their clothes were torn off them. The demon wounded them in the struggle, and they fled forth from the house. Certainly this must have been a very interesting scene on the street of Ephesus, and it stopped all the misuse of the name Jesus, and magnified Him whom Paul preached.

Here we have an example of what befell these men who misused the name of the Son of God. A worse fate will some day befall men and women who falsely use His name and claim to receive power from Him, who have not publicly accepted Him as their Savior. This punishment on the imitators had a great influence upon the thoughtful people of Ephesus. Many who were church members, but lived a careless religious life, made confession, and showed by their works their changed life.

QUESTIONS.

Why call them "vagabond Jews"?

They were of the Jewish nation and religion, and went from town to town to make money by telling fortunes, and pretending by spells and charms to cure diseases.

Whom did these sorcerers try to imitate?

God had wrought extraordinary miracles through Paul. He actually did what the sorcerers pretended to do, who deceived the people and took pay for their services.

Why would unbelieving Jews want to use the name of Jesus?

Paul used His name with success, so they thought they would use the same formula and accomplish their evil work.

What did the man say and do when these imitators presented him with the formula?

How were the deceivers punished in the presence of the people?

Their effort was advertised publicly as a failure and they learned that some names are too sacred for deceivers to use. What effect had it on believers?

(2) Books of Magic Burned.—Acts 19:19-20.

(19) And not a few of them that practised magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they

counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. (20) So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

Many of them must have continued to practice curious arts, and kept in their homes books containing formulas and recipes, for they brought them together in a public place and burned them before all men. The whole value, being about \$8,000, was quickly consumed by the flames. When these books were burned, and the people took to the reading and studying of God's Book, God's Book grew mightily and had wonderful power because people became better acquainted with the true God. If the Christian men and women, in this country, would bring together the books of harmful novels, occultism, and spiritualism, and books on all other subjects which are today leading men and women away from the profound knowledge of God, they would make a greater bonfire than was had in the streets of Ephesus. Why should we cause God's great Book to be hindered, and why feed on trash instead of food God has provided for the hearts of men and women?

QUESTIONS.

What did those do who were guilty of evil practices?

What books were burned?

They made a public bonfire of books that were used for teaching and training people in these superstitious practices.

What was the value of the books that were burned?

50,000 pieces of silver, some \$8,000 worth of books.

In what way did this help the Word of God?

Name the greatest hindrances in Christian homes for spiritual growth.

6. PAUL'S GREAT PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

Acts 19:21-22.

(21) Now after these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. (22) And having sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

The Word had many converts in many places. The books were burned that kept men and women from using the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit, in a deeper consecration and power of evangelization of the world. Paul was now ready to leave this work in the hands of others and soon left himself to visit again the churches in Macedonia and Achaia, and to make another visit to Jerusalem. After this his purpose was to open a Gospel highway to Rome and at least do some work in the political center of the world. However, the work in Ephesus seemed to be important; he was unwilling to leave it immediately, so he sent two of his colaborers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia. The purpose of that mission is explained in 1 Cor. 4:17. While Paul remained at Ephesus he received intelligence concerning some difficulties in the Corinthian church, which really could not be adjusted without some authority from the Apostle who had planted it. Different teachers had developed factions and each one claimed authority. The Apostle also received a letter from the Corinthians, brought by some one from Ephesus, concerning various matters which had troubled the church (1 Cor. 7:1). Paul had written a letter to this church, giving some information helpful to those who were going astray (1 Cor. 5:9). This letter has not been preserved.

Paul, while he is in this prosperous church at Ephesus, writes his first letter to the Corinthian church. A careful study of this letter shows how Paul was disturbed when he learned of work in the Corinthian church being weakened by careless living. This First Letter to the Corinthian church was written about A. D. 57. Timothy had left and the writer was just about to leave. However, Paul continued his labors at Ephesus, but very soon new difficulties were to be met. The progress must be stopped by severe persecution.

QUESTIONS.

When what things were ended?

Why visit Macedonia and Achaia?

His purpose was to visit the churches he had organized in order to strengthen them.

Why did he desire to go to Jerusalem?

That he might visit the mother church and take some contributions to the poor saints.

Why decide to go to Rome?

The Apostle of the Gentiles could not be satisfied without preaching the Gospel in the capital of the Empire.

Why send Timothy and Anthony to Macedonia?

To give notice of Paul's intended visit and to make ready the collections to take with him on his journey to Jerusalem. While he remained at Ephesus what Epistle did he write?

This is the first letter we have to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 16:8-9) and it was written when a great door was opened. This was after the books of magic were burned at Ephesus (19:19-20). It was written about A. D. 57, shortly before Paul left Ephesus to make his journey into Macedonia and Achaia.

7. RIOT OF THE SILVERSMITHS.

Acts 19: 23-41.

(1) Gospel Interferes with Ungodly Gain.—Acts 19: 23-27.

(23) And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way. (24) For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana (Gr. Artemis), brought no little business unto the craftsmen; (25) whom he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth. (26) And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that there are no gods, that are made with hands: (27) and not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

After Paul had written his letters to the Corinthian church there gradually arose, in the same town where the Gospel had flourished, strong opposition which hindered the

progress of his faithful work in Ephesus, and may have brought him to leave really sooner than he expected. In this great city was the temple of Diana, which was reckoned as one of the seven wonders of the world. The inscription discovered at the time of the excavation was exactly what was used by the mob, "The great Diana." While Paul was preaching and winning people away from idol worship, he disturbed the financial interests of those who sold idols. Demetrius and his companions manufactured shrines which were little models of the temple and the goddess. The speech made by Demetrius shows that the truth that Paul had preached had influenced many people who formerly worshiped idols and the charges against him were strictly true. The silversmith acknowledged that the love of gain was the thing that gave him zeal to push the business. This great temple was erected at an enormous expense. Is it any wonder that the charge that Demetrius made against Paul brought forth such outcries from the Diana worshippers? The structure itself was four hundred and twenty feet long and nearly two hundred and fifty feet wide. It was stored with rich treasures of gold and silver. Hundreds of persons, such as priests and virgin priestesses, were connected with the temple. Thousands of people, from all over the known world, were attracted to this great temple to attend the idolatrous festivities and the various games given in honor of the idol. These people brought much money to this city, and the people whose finances were affected were especially aroused.

QUESTIONS.

At what time arose no small stir?

We have just seen how sorcerers and Christians voluntarily gave up a bad business for Christ's sake. Now we see those who receive gain through wickedness.

In what way were the silversmiths affected?

They made little models of the temple and sold them to the heathens.

What progress had the Gospel made?

What was the only motive of those who said, "Our craft is in danger"?

There was no regard for the making of people better and homes purer, but simply that of financial gain.

(2) The Mob and the Riot.—Acts 19: 28-34.

(28) And when they heard this they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. (29) And the city was filled with the confusion: and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel. (30) And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. (31) And certain also of the Asiarchs (that is, officers having charge of festivals, etc., in the Roman province of Asia), being his friends, sent unto him and besought him not to adventure himself into the theatre. (32) Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was in confusion; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. (33) And they brought Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made a defence unto the people. (34) But when they perceived that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

In answer to the charge of Demetrius, the people cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." The whole city was excited. They took hold of two of Paul's companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, who had come from Macedonia, and rushed them into the theater. Paul was anxious about his two friends, and determined also to go in, but the disciples did not permit him. The whole company seemed to be an unruly mob, and many of them did not know what the excitement was about. During the time of this excitement the Jews put one, Alexander, to address the mob. Whether he was a believer or not, is not told, but the mob knew that the Jews hated idolatry, and the mob would not let him speak, and they kept up the excitement for two hours, crying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

QUESTIONS.

When the silversmith made his appeal, what was the cry of the people?

Why take Gaius and Aristarchus?

The mob, not finding Paul, seized his companions and rushed them into the theater, where criminals were often exposed to wild beasts.

What was the fate of Gaius and Aristarchus?

It is not here stated, but both names occur afterwards in history, and probably refer to the same people.

Why did Paul desire to go into the public building?

He was unwilling to allow his friends to suffer in his stead.

What was the condition of the mob?

Who was Alexander, and how long did the mob keep him quiet?

Paul says (2 Tim. 4:14), "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil. The Lord reward him according to his works." The Jews who were opposed to the teaching of Jesus, were afraid that the mob would identify them with the Christians, and they put him forth to make their defense before the mob.

(3) Intervention by a Public Officer.—Acts 19:35-41.

(35) And when the town-clerk had quieted the multitude, he saith, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter (or, heaven)?

(36) Seeing then that these things cannot be gainsaid, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash. (37) For ye have brought hither these men, who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. (38) If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, the courts are open (or, court days are kept), and there are proconsuls: let them accuse one another. (39) But if ye seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. (40) For indeed we are in danger to be accused concerning this day's riot, there being no cause for it: and as touching it we shall not be able to give account of this concourse. (41) And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

Ephesus was a free city, governed by a popular assembly and by magistrates. The chief magistrate was called "town-clerk," whom we would call mayor. When

he had quieted the people, showing what great influence this goddess had in that all the people in Ephesus worshiped her and that she was cast down by Jupiter, he said: "These are facts that can not be altered by anybody's speech, nor can they be changed by such rioting as is carried on here, therefore you ought to keep quiet and not do anything rashly. Gaius and Aristarchus and the other men are not robbers of temples, nor blasphemers of the goddess Diana. Now if Demetrius has any matter against anyone, the law courts are open, and there are judges ready to take up misdemeanors in every province. They are the persons to appeal to for justice. Should the matter be one against the whole city, it would only be proper that it should be determined in an assembly called in the regular way, and not by an assembly such as has been brought together here by excitement." After he had made this address to the people, the people were satisfied and he dismissed them.

QUESTIONS.

What was the image referred to?

It was the image that fell down from Jupiter, and therefore none of the gods that were made with man's hands.

What were the points in his argument?

He turns them over to the regular methods of the law.

What is the meaning of "determined in a lawful assembly"?

Why in danger of being accused?

Had the uproar been reported to the emperor?

There was danger of receiving punishment. We cannot justify ourselves in breaking the peace in saying that others broke it first.

8. PAUL'S SECOND VISIT TO EUROPE.

Acts 20: 1-6.

(1) To Macedonia.—Acts 20: 1.

(1) And after the uproar ceased, Paul having sent for the disciples and exhorted them, took leave of them, and departed to go into Macedonia.

We closed our former chapter with Satan's defeat when he excited the mob against the servants of the Lord, but God vindicated them and brought them forth and gave them the victory. After this defeat, when the uproar had ceased, Paul had a farewell meeting with his disciples. Then he left the town and proceeded at once to go over to Macedonia and other places to strengthen the churches.

QUESTIONS.

When had he the meeting with the church? 2 Cor. 7:5-12; 12:12.

What other information about Paul's work? 2 Cor. 12:12; 7:5-12.

What church did he visit?

What book did he write?

Second Corinthians was written about 57 A. D., after the experience of the mob (2 Cor. 1:8-10), while in Macedonia (2 Cor. 2:12-13), before arriving at Greece, where Corinth is located (20:2). Thus far we have four letters written by Paul, First and Second Thessalonians from Corinth, First Corinthians from Ephesus, and Second Corinthians from Macedonia.

(2) To Greece.—Acts 20:2-3.

(2) And when he had gone through those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece. (3) And when he had spent three months there, and a plot was laid against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedonia.

Paul's original plan was to go from Ephesus to Corinth and then come north and go into Macedonia (2 Cor. 1:15, 16). He must have remained for some time in Macedonia. Paul was greatly disturbed about the church at Corinth and wondered what effect his letter might have on the church. While visiting churches in Macedonia, Titus brought him much more favorable news from the church at Corinth than it was anticipated his first letter might produce. He learned that the church had made some change for the better. He gave some advice concerning continued love for those who had erred and now had been brought to see the wrong. He also gave encouragement to the church to meet his wishes

in getting ready the contribution for which he had asked. Letter written from Macedonia about A. D. 57. After writing this second letter Paul sent it by Titus to the church at Corinth.

Paul himself remained, for some time, with the churches in Macedonia, Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. His stay in Macedonia was not without much anxiety concerning the church at Corinth (2 Cor. 7: 5). However, he remained for some time in Macedonia after sending the letter by Titus, as that would give the Corinthian church time to consider and receive some help from his last letter. Luke does not give us any detailed account of his labors during the three months' work in the Corinthian church. It was during this period that he wrote the letters to Rome and Galatia.

We learned of Paul's earnest desire to visit the disciples at Rome, but his plans thus far had been interfered with by the Jews, and his visit prevented. Not knowing how soon he would get to Rome, he took occasion, at this time, to write this letter to the Roman Christians. The student finds what Paul said, true, "how large a letter." This may refer to actual handwriting, but everyone who has carefully studied Romans has found it to be one of the most difficult letters that he wrote. It was written about A. D. 57.

While at Corinth, he also learned of the Judaizing teachers, who were at work in the Galatian churches, and caused much disturbance among the Galatian disciples. They influenced the disciples against Paul, claiming he was without authority and not equal in authority with the Apostles who had organized and worked in Jerusalem. In this way they did much harm in the Galatian church, and in order that Paul might set himself right before these churches he sends them the Galatian letter, by Titus and two other brethren, whose names are not mentioned in the let-

ter. This letter was written about the same time as the one to the Romans.

The Jews, who had not forgotten the defeat of Gallio, lay in wait that they might kill Paul when he was about to sail into Syria. It may be possible that their purpose was to accomplish this on board the ship. To go into Syria he would naturally leave from the port of Cenchrea, and because of this he was compelled to change his plans and return to Macedonia.

QUESTIONS.

What was the purpose of this visit?

How long was he with the Corinthian church?

Why did they want to put him to death?

How did Paul disappoint these enemies?

What books did he write at Corinth on the second visit?

Epistle to the Galatians, and the Epistle to the Romans, both written about A. D. 57 or 58.

(3) Journey from Corinth to Troas.—Acts 20: 4-6.

(4) And there accompanied him as far as Asia, Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. (5) But these had gone before and were waiting for us at Troas. (6) And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we tarried seven days.

During the three months' stay at Corinth the Apostle gave instruction according to his promise, concerning the things that were out of order in the Corinthian church. Having written the two important letters, as mentioned before, and received the collection for the saints in Judea, seven brethren accompanied him into Macedonia and then went before him into Asia, to wait at Troas for Paul and Luke. It may be possible that these brethren mentioned here were appointed by the different churches in which contributions were received, for the purpose of seeing that it would be delivered to the saints at Jerusalem and a re-

port be made back to the church. The contributions had to be carried. There was some danger on account of robbers to take these collections, which were in silver, and therefore special need for these seven brethren to accompany him. Sopater was from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus (second), probably so named because the second son, as were Tertius, third, and Quartus, fourth, from Thessalonica (Rom. 16: 22-23). Since these three, second, third and fourth, were with Paul at Corinth, it is altogether probable that they were brothers. Gaius was from Derbe, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus were from Asia. The last two are new names among the companions of Paul. Tychicus, so often mentioned by Paul, a "beloved brother," a "faithful minister," was with the Apostle at Rome. Paul sent him to the churches at Ephesus (Col. 4: 7; Eph. 6: 21), and was also with him in his trying closing experience at Rome, while writing to Titus (Titus 3: 12), and also while he wrote his last letter, his second letter to Timothy (2 Tim. 4: 12). Trophimus was also a faithful companion of Paul, who is not forgotten by the Apostle in writing his very last, touching letter. He refers to him (2 Tim. 4: 20) as being sick at Miletus when he had to leave there.

"These going before." The seven persons mentioned accompanied Paul through Macedonia. Paul, however, remained in Macedonia, at Philippi, until the feast of the Passover. The other seven brethren had gone on to Troas. Paul may have stopped over, not only to spend the Passover season here, but to meet Luke, who had not been with Paul for about seven years. The last account we had of him was at this same place where Paul met him (16: 16). In writing the account he used "we" for the last time, and in 20: 5, 6 he again begins the use of "us" and "we," and so the beloved physician and penman, used by the Holy Spirit to write the book, has joined the Apostle, and after a voyage of five days they joined the brethren, who went before them to Troas.

The Apostle staid in Europe from the time he left the church at Ephesus up to this point, being from Pentecost to the Passover, covering a period of about nine months (1 Cor. 16: 8; Acts 20: 6), and if he left earlier than he had expected, because of the strong opposition, he may have been in Europe nearly a year. These seven brethren being here at Troas some time before Paul arrived, and Paul and Luke joining them, some of the work that was neglected on the former journeys may have received attention at this time. This was an opportunity for doing great things for the Lord, by a band of consecrated men, traveling under the direction of Jesus and having the Holy Spirit, their great Teacher, as a constant Companion.

QUESTIONS.

Name the seven brethren and tell where they are from.

What was probably the purpose of their being with Paul?

Where did they tarry for Paul?

What was Paul doing at Philippi and who joined him there?

Why refer to the days of unleavened bread?

To designate the time of year, the Passover, and to give us the time of nearly one year since Paul left Ephesus to continue his missionary labors in Europe.

How long did they stay at Troas?

9. CHURCH SERVICES IN TROAS.—Acts 20: 7-12.

(7) And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight. (8) And there were many lights in the upper chamber where we were gathered together. (9) And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep he fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead. (10) And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Make ye no ado; for his life is in him. (11) And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. (12) And they brought the lad alive, and were not a little comforted.

The last day of their stay at Troas was the Lord's Day, "The first day of the week." The seventh day ended at six o'clock in the evening. The Christian congregation met in an upper room on the third floor. This was the evening for the "love feast," accompanied, as was usual, with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. This was the day on which Jesus arose from the dead; it was the day on which the Holy Spirit was given; it is the period in the history of the church when the disciples came together,—the disciples then belonging to the Lord, not to some creed or denomination. (The division into sects or parties was then wholly unknown.) What a glorious meeting that must have been! The words of Jesus, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come," must not be forgotten by the disciples. First, in them we show to the world that we believe that Jesus died and arose and lives as our Representative. Second, that we do not only believe that He is going to return sometime, but that we are looking for His return any day.

Previous to this feast Paul preached a very instructive sermon to the disciples, who had gathered on the Lord's Day, continuing his sermon until midnight, at which time an accident happened to Eutychus, who was one of the audience, and sitting on the window seat. Some of the members may have been slaves and were tired from the day's labor; and it may have been very warm in the room, so that Eutychus was completely overcome, and fell from the third story and was taken up dead. Paul immediately stopped his discourse, and went down and embraced him, and he was restored to life. Paul said to the bystanders, "Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him." After performing this miracle he returned to the upper room, where the feast that had been disturbed by the accident was now celebrated.

These services continued the entire night. When they were ready to depart they brought forth the young man

alive, and it was a great comfort to all that he could be returned to his neighbors and friends, as an example for greater inspiration for the followers of Christ in that community. These people, so deeply interested in religious matters, did not measure out their public services by so many minutes, but continued their services in harmony with their profound reverence for the Master, whose cause they represented.

QUESTIONS.

What service was held on the first day of the week?

Who did the preaching?

It was a special service of consecration, and Paul's farewell sermon exhorting the disciples to be loyal to their Master. What happened to Eutychus, and who restored him and how?

10. JOURNEY TO MILETUS.

Acts 20: 13-16.

(13) But we, going before to the ship, set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, intending himself to go by land (or, on foot). (41) And when he met us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. (15) And sailing from thence, we came the following day over against Chios; and the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after we came to Miletus. (16) For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

This same company took ship to sail to Assos, a distance of about thirty miles, but Paul, for some reason not stated by the author, preferred to go by land himself, a distance of about twenty miles from Troas by road. Just why he preferred to be alone on this journey we can only conjecture, but a man on whose heart the Lord had laid the directing of the church affairs had plenty to do on this journey while walking, conversing with his Master concerning the best interests of the church. It was a time of communion and prayer. It is such a journey alone that equips men and women better for greater work for the

Master. Is it a sacrifice to tear loose from our choicest earthly friends and companions of saints to walk with our truest and highest Friend and commune with Him?

Paul joined his companions at Assos and went with them by ship to Mitylene. The historian gives us nothing here but the passage from the one place to the other, simply mentioning the time it required to make the journey. Paul wanted to sail by Ephesus. If the ship had been under his control, he might have spent the time at Ephesus to a much better purpose than he had at Miletus. He was now at Miletus, which was thirty miles from Ephesus.

QUESTIONS.

Where did Paul join his companions after leaving Troas and why?

How far did he travel each day?

(1) Monday, following the preaching on the Lord's Day, he left Troas and went to Mitylene. (2) Tuesday, from Mitylene to Chios. (3) Wednesday, from Chios to Samos. (4) Thursday he arrived at Miletus and sent word to the elders at Ephesus to meet him at this point. It took about this time, from Thursday to Saturday, to get word to the elders, and they made their journey from Ephesus to Miletus, a distance of about thirty miles.

At what time did Paul desire to reach Jerusalem?

At the time of one of the great Jewish feasts, called Pentecost. Paul was at Philippi at the time of the first great feast, Unleavened Bread or Passover, which was just fifty days before the feast he desired to attend at Jerusalem. At the close of the seven days' feast he spent five days on the journey to Troas, seven at Troas, the last day being the Lord's Day, and one week from that day he preached his farewell sermon to the Ephesian elders. In order to meet the Jews who would assemble at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost he could not tarry long at any point.

11. PAUL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE EPHESIAN ELDERS.

Acts 20: 17-38.

(1) A Review of His Past Three Years' Ministry.—

Acts 20: 17-21.

(17) And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church. (18) And when they were come to him, he said unto them,

Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, (19) serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews; (20) how I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, (21) testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

The vessel on which Paul expected to continue his journey remained only a few days at Miletus, which made it unsafe for him to go to Ephesus himself, for fear that he might not return in time, and thus defeat his purpose in being present in Jerusalem at the time of the feast. The elders, upon receiving the invitation to meet him at Miletus, came without delay. They arrived on the very day on which the vessel was to continue her voyage. Paul desired to have a farewell meeting with these faithful elders of the church in which he labored for three years, and impressed them with the responsibility resting upon them and gave them advice as to the best way of meeting it. These elders were acquainted with his labors from the first day until the last, and how he behaved under all circumstances. "The people have made false charges against me, that I did not speak with inspiration. I served the Lord with all humility, and the work was such that the tears ran freely; I was very patient and yet determined to continue the work for the Master under the trials which befell me through the secret plotting of the Jews. All these things did not hinder my zeal in the ministry and keep away anything that was profit-

able for you. I did not only speak in public, but I labored from house to house, with all classes, both Jews and Gentiles. The theme of my ministry to all classes was 'repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.'" He preached that the Jews and Gentiles were lost and could be saved only by repentance and faith.

QUESTIONS.

On what day of the week did Paul preach the sermon, and how long had he been away from Ephesus?

What about his spirit and zeal in the ministry?

The largest house in the universe is God's house.

(2) Anticipated Persecution and Determination to Stay True to the Master to the End.—Acts 20: 22-27.

(22) And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: (23) save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. (24) But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel (or, good tidings) of the grace of God. (25) And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more. (26) Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. (27) For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God.

He was on his way to Jerusalem. He was depressed in spirit, not knowing what awaited him. Supreme love was the motive back of a life that moved on under such conditions. But he said, "Nothing can move me. I count my obligations to Him who called me dearer than my life. It is in this way that I expect to reach the end with joy. And now I know that this will be our last meeting, and those of you who have been my companions in public and from house to house, laboring together in the ministry, shall see my face no more. It was my purpose to declare every-

thing to you that was given me by the Lord, which was profitable to you, and therefore I know that you will bear evidence to the fact that I am in debt to no one, because under no circumstances did I fail to declare the whole counsel of God." This should certainly be a warning to all ambassadors of God, that they might be able to say in their farewell sermon what Paul said to those who knew him best, as he was about to leave them.

QUESTIONS.

What was Paul's immediate purpose and how know what was awaiting him?

Having met persecutions, and some more ahead of him, what did he decide to do? What was his sorrowful prediction?

How did Paul feel as to his obligations to them?

(3) The Elders' Responsibility.—Acts 20: 28-35.

(28) Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops (or, overseers), to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased (Gr. acquired) with his own blood. (29) I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; (30) and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. (31) Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. (32) And now I commend you to God (some ancient authorities read "the Lord"), and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified. (33) I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. (34) Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. (35) In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

The Apostle spoke to these people about his special work for the three years passed in the church at Ephesus, the things that were awaiting him in the future, and what his purpose was in meeting conditions in whatever way

presented, calling attention to his own labors and example of faithfulness in preaching the Gospel. He now turned his attention to the representatives of the church at Ephesus, warning them of their great responsibility to this church, being made overseers by the Holy Spirit. "This church, made up of individuals who are 'called-out ones,' and purchased by the precious blood of the Son of God, to feed a flock that has cost what this flock has cost, must be fed by men set aside by the Holy Spirit as 'feeders.' This flock is to grow, and the growth will show the kind of food they receive and by whom fed. There are many who by their feeding scatter the flock, and are not interested in the flock, but only interested in themselves. Now remember that this flock has cost tears night and day, to bring it to its healthy growth as it is now delivered into your keeping. In leaving you this great responsibility your only hope will be 'faithfulness to God, a constant companionship and study of the Word.' This will help you to grow and give you an inheritance with the sanctified." After directing them to God and His Word he referred to the disinterested motives which animated him in his labors in their midst,—that at no time did he covet any man's wealth. Perhaps he held up his hands with which he labored so that he might at no time be charged as having labored with the motive for an increase in material wealth, but found the words of Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," true during his entire ministry.

QUESTIONS.

Who had appointed the elders as overseers of the church?

What value does he place upon the church of God?

What kind of food will keep a church growing and healthy?

What opposition must elders expect to meet?

Grievous wolves, avowed enemies of the flock. They may come in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7: 15), or under the guise of friends and teachers. The greatest danger was to come from members of the church who would be false, and by their influence lead others away from the truth.

What was to be their source of guidance and strength?
What kind of service must be given?

It must be unselfish; they must learn that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

(4) The Parting Blessing.—Acts 20: 36-38.

(36) And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. (37) And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, (38) sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.

At the conclusion of the address the whole company knelt together in prayer, which was offered up by Paul. What a prayer it must have been! Luke was there, and yet we have no record of the prayer itself. What an outpouring of the Spirit, as these leaders knelt together for the last time! They all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him. The main sorrow in this closing scene is that they should see his face no more. They accompanied him to the ship and it was with great difficulty that he could tear himself away from them, as he had been their spiritual father in Christ Jesus.

QUESTIONS.

Describe the parting scene.

Who had offered the parting prayer?

What was the cause of the greatest sorrow?

12. JOURNEY FROM MILETUS TO TYRE.

Acts 21: 1-6.

(1) And when it came to pass that we were parted from them and had set sail, we came with a straight course unto Cos, and the next day unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: (2) and having found a ship crossing over unto Phœnicia, we went aboard, and set sail. (3) And when we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left hand, we sailed unto Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unlade her burden. (4) And having found the disciples, we tarried there seven days: and these

said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem. (5) And when it came to pass that we had accomplished the days, we departed and went on our journey; and they all, with wives and children, brought us on our way till we were out of the city: and kneeling down on the beach, we prayed, and bade each other farewell; (6) and we went on board the ship, but they returned home again.

“After they had,” that is, after the Apostle and his companions had torn themselves away from the brethren at Ephesus, they continued their journey by ship, about forty miles to Coos, and the following day from Coos to Rhodes, between forty and fifty miles, and then continued their journey from Rhodes to Patara, a seaport of Lycia. At this point the passengers changed vessels. They took the vessel sailing by the west coast of the Isle of Cyprus. The vessel went in an easterly direction, coming to the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea, it being bound for Syria. The name “Syria” was given to the whole eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea from Cilicia to Egypt. The vessel landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload her burden. This gave Paul and his companions an opportunity to meet the disciples at this place and hold religious services during the period the boat was stopping at this point. It would appear that it took some effort to find the disciples here. Some of these disciples, who were under the direction of the Spirit, urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem, but when the seven days were ended and Paul with his companions was ready to start, the believers at Tyre,—men, women and children,—accompanied them out of the city and had a prayer meeting by the seashore. These, as well as others, felt that this no doubt would be the last meeting they would be permitted to enjoy together. After this farewell prayer, the disciples at Tyre returned to their homes, and Paul and his companions continued on their journey by ship.

QUESTIONS.

When did Paul leave Ephesus?

Describe the journey in full from Miletus to Tyre.

At what point in Syria did they land?

Tyre, which is about one hundred miles north of Jerusalem.

What was Paul's first mission after reaching Tyre?

He had passed through this district before and others had labored here so he was not disappointed in church fellowship at this place.

How did the Christians know at Tyre about the danger awaiting Paul at Jerusalem?

How did the church members express their appreciation?

Fathers, mothers, and children accompanied him, and enjoyed a prayer meeting on the shore before he left.

13. PAUL'S JOURNEY FROM TYRE, AND VISIT AT CÆSAREA.

Acts 21: 7-14.

(7) And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; and we saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. (8) And on the morrow we departed, and came unto Cæsarea: and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him. (9) Now this man had four virgin daughters, who prophesied. (10) And as we tarried there some days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet, named Agabus. (11) And coming to us, and taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. (12) And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. (13) Then Paul answered, What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. (14) And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

The vessel on which they traveled did not go any further than Ptolemais. Here they found a Christian community and remained one day. It no doubt was all the

time that Paul felt he could spare, and after his usual exhortations and entreaties, he with his company departed on foot to Cæsarea. Here was the home of a Christian man who had been under the Master's direction for many years. He was one of the seven deacons, held the great revival in Samaria, helped the Ethiopian to find the Lord and then baptized him, was up and down along the coast, preaching the Gospel, and now, no doubt, was the pastor of the church in the town Paul was visiting. Their stay in Cæsarea lasted several days. While this man did great work for the Lord, he had four daughters who also prophesied. In the early church women were admitted into the public service for the Master. While they tarried in this spiritual home there came down from Judea a prophet, named Agabus. During his stay with them he took Paul's girdle and with it bound his own hands and feet, and said to Paul and his companions, as well as to those who had gathered in the house of Philip, that the Holy Spirit told him that the Jews at Jerusalem would bind the man that owned the girdle, and after binding him would deliver him over to the Gentiles. After receiving this information, the companions with Paul, as well as those who had assembled, united their efforts and with tears tried to persuade Paul not to continue his journey to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit had informed this company concerning Paul's binding and deliverance, but the Holy Spirit had told Paul to go, and he had to be obedient to the Heavenly voice and could not listen to the pleadings of his fellow disciples.

"By your pleading you make it harder for me to carry out the wish of the Holy Spirit, for I am ready not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Then when they realized that he could not be persuaded and that he was under the direction of a Higher Law, they said, "The will of the Lord be done."

QUESTIONS.

Where did he complete the sea voyage?

At Ptolemais, about thirty miles south of Tyre.

When did they arrive and how long did they remain?

They arrived about evening and remained over the next day, Tuesday.

When did they arrive at Cæsarea?

They left Ptolemais Wednesday, May 10, and remained until about the 15th. They traveled by land around Mount Carmel (which was eight miles south of Ptolemais) along the coast for thirty or forty miles to Cæsarea.

Describe the work Peter did at one time at Cæsarea.

With whom did Paul and his company abide?

Give history of Philip and his laborers.

Give description of what the prophet said about Paul going to Jerusalem.

What effect had his prediction on Paul's companions and in what way did they make his mission more difficult?

14. PAUL'S JOURNEY FROM CÆSAREA TO JERUSALEM.

Acts 21: 15-17.

(15) And after these days we took up (or, made ready) our baggage and went up to Jerusalem. (16) And there went with us also certain of the disciples from Cæsarea, bringing with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

(17) And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

After the day spent at Cæsarea, with the brethren, they prepared their baggage, which they carried as they proceeded on their journey to Jerusalem. Paul was going into the city with everything he had. Luke tells us (24: 17) what his mission was at Jerusalem, as well as what some of this baggage contained. Some disciples from Cæsarea accompanied Paul. Among the number was a man from Cyprus. He was a Hellenist, a member of the church for some time, as he belonged to the early disciples. He sympathized with the work among the Gentiles. This man

owned a house at Jerusalem, and it was just the place to have Paul and his associates lodge during the Feast of Pentecost. They had to travel a distance of about seventy miles, from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. When they arrived at Jerusalem they received a very hearty welcome from the brethren.

QUESTIONS.

Why say "after those days"?

It took about two days to go to Jerusalem. The Feast of Pentecost must just about then have been at hand, and a great multitude of Jews were present when Paul arrived. Paul met some brethren from the different provinces with whom he was acquainted.

What is meant by "we took up our carriages"?

It means baggage. It was what the men carried.

Who was Mnason?

How were they received in Jerusalem?

How many visits did he make after his conversion and give an account of each?

Section V. Paul's Rejection in Palestine and His Imprisonment.—Acts 21: 18 to 26: 32.

1. PAUL'S ADVICE FROM THE BISHOP.

Acts 21: 18-26.

(18) And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. (19) And when he had saluted them, he rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles through his ministry. (20) And they, when they heard it, glorified God; and they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands (Gr. myriads) there are among the Jews of them that have believed; and they are all zealous for the law: (21) and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. (22) What is it therefore? they will certainly hear that thou art come. (23) Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men that have a vow on them; (24) these take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges for them, that they may shave their heads: and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been

informed concerning thee; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, keeping the law. (25) But as touching the Gentiles that have believed, we wrote, giving judgment that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication. (26) Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them (or, took the men the next day, and purifying himself, etc.) went into the temple, declaring the fulfilment of the days of purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them.

When he arrived in Jerusalem, and received the cordial welcome from the brethren, his prayer was answered; the contributions which he had received from the different churches were distributed among the saints (Rom. 15: 31). Then the day following Paul, with his companion in travel, had a meeting with James and all the elders, and after their usual greeting (as was customary on all occasions of this kind) the Apostle related what God had done through his ministry among the Gentiles. He gave a very minute description, rehearsing the things one by one which had happened in his great activity. The Holy Spirit now spoke to the leaders in the church, of the Lord, through Paul, and gave the Jews, even the Christian Jews, an opportunity to accept or reject Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. When these leaders heard what God had accomplished through Paul they felt good and glorified the Lord.

The Bishop said: "Brother, there are thousands of Jews who believe, but they are zealous for the law. They have been informed that you teach all the Jews that are among the Gentiles to be disobedient to the law of circumcision and to forsake other of our customs. Now what will happen when all of these people learn that you are here? We would recommend that you do this in order to show by practice that what they have reported against you is not true." Four Jewish Christians were performing a vow and Paul could join their company and take the same vow upon himself; since he was a newcomer it would be expected of him to pay the fees required from the whole

company (Num. 6: 14-18). "As far as the Gentiles are concerned, we have by letter settled that question and require of them only the four things set forth in the letter at the time the decision was made."

QUESTIONS.

When was the church meeting and who were present?

What James was the Bishop? Gal. 1: 19; 2: 12.

Give a review of the work God had done by Paul among the Gentiles.

What was the position of the Jewish disciples as to the law and circumcision?

The disciples of Jerusalem were all zealous for the law. They claimed the law of Moses still binding.

What were the charges against Paul?

That he taught apostasy from Moses. Neglect of circumcision. The abandonment of customs, such as the Nazarite vows, with their burnt, sin, and meat offerings (Num. 6: 13-17), which are referred to in Paul's Epistles. He tells them to abstain from unclean meats, and the observance of days (Rom. 14; Gal. 4: 9-10; Col. 2: 16-17).

What was his teaching as to law?

He calls it a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. His purpose was not to destroy but to fulfill.

Why did Paul offer sacrifice in connection with purification?

What did the church advise Paul to do and why?

He was requested to perform certain Levitical rites of purification in conjunction with the four men who had taken the vow. The reference is simply to an appearance in the temple, by prayers and sacrifices which were to be offered there, and for which, in particular, the Jews prepared and sanctified themselves by ablutions and bathing.

Did Paul teach against the Mosaic law?

He nowhere gave instruction to the Jews not to circumcise their children as a national rite, but positively held that salvation for Jews and Gentiles was obtained, not by circumcision, but by faith in the Crucified Redeemer.

2. PAUL BEATEN BY THE MOB AND ARRESTED BY THE CHIEF CAPTAIN.

Acts 21: 27-36.

(27) And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all

the multitude and laid hands on him, (28) crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. (29) For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. (30) And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut. (31) And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain (or, military tribune) of the band (or, cohort), that all Jerusalem was in confusion. (32) And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul. (33) Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done. (34) And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the castle. (35) And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd; (36) for the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, Away with him.

Paul offered no objection to the requests presented by the elders, and on the very next day after this interview Paul, purifying himself, entered with the other four men into the temple, expecting, when the seven days had expired, to present themselves at the altar with the necessary sacrifices. But before the end of the seven days had arrived, the Jews who had been in Asia, perhaps some of those who had lain in wait for him in Ephesus, were present, and when they saw him in the temple, stirred up the people around them and laid hands on them. These Jews who had come in had known him and could point him out to the Jews in Jerusalem, who were not acquainted with him. They hated him, and just waited for an opportunity to do him harm. They at once cried out to the people that he was untrue to the Mosaic law and even to the temple, and now was going so far as to bring Gentiles into the temple and pollute it. This last charge they made against

him was because of a disciple named Trophimus, an Ephesian, a Gentile whom they knew Paul associated with, in his ministry. While the statement was untrue, yet it served its purpose, for the whole city became excited and the people ran together and drew Paul out of the temple and closed the doors. As the mob was about to put him to death, tidings came to the chief captain of the band of the uproar in the city; he immediately took soldiers and centurions, and when the mob saw the chief captain and soldiers they stopped beating Paul. The captain commanded him to be bound with two chains, asked who he was and what he had done, and when they could not give to the captain a satisfactory answer as to the charge, he was commanded to be carried by the soldiers into the castle, because of the violence of the people. The mob followed the soldiers as they carried Paul, and cried out, "Away with him!" This was the same shout, by the same people, heard thirty years before, when the mob gathered in the same city and yelled around Pilate's judgment hall.

QUESTIONS.

What was the motive of the Jews of Asia?

What was the ground of their charges?

Who was the Gentile referred to in the text?

What did the mob do with Paul?

If Paul's own brethren, the church in Jerusalem, had become prejudiced against him on account of his preaching and bringing Gentiles into the church, it is not surprising that the hatred of the unbelieving Jews towards him should be intense. They drew him from the temple to prevent the defilement of the Holy Place by the blood which was likely to be shed. The purpose of the mob was, when in the court of the Gentiles, to put him to death by beating, which the officers of the law prevented.

Why bind Paul with chains?

That he might have a trial in harmony with the Roman law, and time would be given for legal proceedings and filing of charges. Being chained to two soldiers would be a protection to Paul from further abuse by the mob.

3. PAUL RECEIVES PRIVILEGE TO ADDRESS THE MOB.

Acts 21: 37-40.

(37) And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek? (38) Art thou not then the Egyptian, who before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins? (39) But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people. (40) And when he had given him leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with the hand unto the people; and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, saying.

God was watching over His servant. His life was in the hands of the Lord and not that of the mob. The Apostle, as he was hurried away from the mob, asked permission of the chief captain to speak. He seemed to have been about the only man not excited in this critical hour. He thought it was an opportunity to speak to his countrymen and that perhaps he might win them. Paul surprised the chief captain when he spoke to him in Greek, for the latter thought he was a certain Egyptian, who before this time had caused a disturbance and was at the head of an organization of four thousand murderers. He was surprised to find his prisoner a man of culture, a Jew from Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city. This was a well-known city and highly favored by the government, so that its inhabitants were exempt from taxation.

"I am one of its citizens and earnestly desire permission from you to speak to these people." The chief captain granted the request of Paul, who now stood on the stairs, midway between the temple court and the castle. Bound with chains, he beckoned with his hands to the people, and when there was silence, addressed them in the Hebrew tongue.

QUESTIONS.

Why did Paul ask to speak?

That the people might see their folly and that he might win some to Jesus. Also that the chief captain might know that there was no cause for this insurrection, and that his prisoner was a man of culture.

Why say a "citizen of no mean city"?

Where was the appeal made to the officer?

How could he beckon with his hands when chained to soldiers?

Why now speak in Hebrew?

It was a mark of respect for Jewish nationality. This they did not expect from Paul, and the result was that the silence became universal at the utterance of his first sentence.

4. PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE MOB.

Acts 22: 1-21.

(1) His Condition before Conversion Same as Theirs.—

Acts 22: 1-5.

(1) Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now make unto you.

(2) And when they heard that he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet: and he saith,

(3) I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day: (4) and I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. (5) As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to Damascus to bring them also that were there unto Jerusalem in bonds to be punished.

The Apostle had Roman soldiers all about him when he addressed his fellow countrymen in a most respectful and conciliatory manner. "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense." False charges had been made against him. He was in the hands of soldiers, protected, that his own people might not do him any harm. He spoke of the simple experience of his own soul. "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, of the dispersion like hundreds of my audience; and while

I am foreign-born, I was educated in this city, and had as my instructor Gamaliel, whose teaching was according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers. And I was zealous in the law, and against the way of Christ just as you are here this day. I have even gone further than you,—persecuted Christians to death and delivered men and women into prisons. This I can prove to you by the official records, which are in the hands of the high priests and elders.” He referred to the letters which so many years ago he had received as authority to persecute the believing Jews of Damascus. “Are not some in the audience who remember this young Pharisee as the persecutor of the Christians?” It was a confession of his persecuting zeal.

QUESTIONS.

What effect had his Hebrew language?

What city was his birthplace and home?

Where was he educated and who was his instructor?

What is said as to his zeal?

What had he done with the Christians?

Who had the record of his authority for persecution?

Paul called attention to three things by which he proved that he was the same as his hearers before his conversion: (1) He was a Jew. (2) While of foreign birth, he was educated by one of the most famous masters and according to the strict laws of the fathers. (3) He was as zealous against the work of Christ as were his hearers.

(2) Paul Changed by Divine Intervention.—Acts 22: 6-16.

(6) And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. (7) And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? (8) And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. (9) And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. (10) And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. (11) And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that

were with me I came into Damascus. (12) And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there, (13) came unto me, and standing by me said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in that very hour I looked up on him. (14) And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. (15) For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. (16) And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name.

A person so born, educated, and zealous for what he had learned, how could he be so changed now unless by the direct influence of the Lord, taking possession of him? "I was on my way to Damascus when God supernaturally interfered and gave an entirely new direction to all of my energy. I saw a supernatural light which blinded me, and heard a voice say, 'Why persecutest thou Me?' When I inquired who was speaking, the voice said, 'I am Jesus.' Even those who traveled with me saw the light, but understood not the voice. I asked the voice what I was to do, and the Lord said, 'Continue your journey to Damascus and there you will be informed what to do.' The light was so bright that it blinded my eyes, so that I could not see, and my companions took me by the hand and led me to Damascus. When I reached Damascus, Ananias, a man who had a good report among the Jews, a devout man according to the law, came unto me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive thy sight,' and at the same time my eyes were opened. This good Jew not only wrought a miracle in opening my eyes, but showed to me that the God of our fathers had chosen me that I might know His will, by seeing the Just One." (The Just One here means Christ; he does not use said word, yet the people know whom he means.) "And by seeing that Just One and hearing His voice, I was to be a witness of Him to all men." (The word Gentile, he is not yet ready to utter before this angry mob.) Paul meant to say that, with all his education and zeal against the saints, he was in need of Divine forgiveness. This same Ananias

urged Paul to be baptized and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

QUESTIONS.

At what time of day was his conversion? 22:6.

Where did this occur?

Did his associates see the light and hear the Lord?

We learn (9:7) that Paul's attendants heard a voice, but here we are informed that they did not understand it.

What was the cause of the temporary blindness and for how long?

His temporary blindness was caused (9:9; 22:11) by the glory of the Light and lasted three days.

Why say "a devout man according to law"?

Ananias is simply called a disciple (9:10). Here Paul's description is given for the purpose of reconciling the Jews. Why say "God of our fathers"?

Give the whole speech of Ananias.

(3) God Sends Paul to the Gentiles.—Acts 22: 17-21.

(17) And it came to pass that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, (18) and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me. (19) And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: (20) and when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him. (21) And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles.

He showed to this congregation that he was just like they were before God took hold of him and changed his plans, and even after his conversion and baptism, his purpose was not to go to the Gentiles, but to Jerusalem. "I came right here to this temple, and while I was engaged in worship and prayer, God appeared to me in a vision, and said to me, 'Make haste and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me.' Even then I was unwilling to obey, and plead for permission to remain, by reciting to them my former conduct,—how I imprisoned and beat in all the synagogues

those who believed, and even when Stephen was stoned, I consented to his death, and stood by and took care of the garments of those who slew him," thinking that this would induce them to listen to him now. Yet his pleading before the Lord was all in vain, and the Lord said, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." By this he had fully demonstrated to his Jewish audience that the accusation against him was false, that if ever a Jew loved the Jewish nation it was himself, but that the Lord had Himself called him to go to the Gentiles.

QUESTIONS.

What was Paul's purpose immediately after his baptism?

What was he doing in Jerusalem when he had the vision?

Give the conversation between Paul and the Lord at this time in the temple.

Can a man have his own way when purchased by the blood of another?

How long in Jerusalem and reasons for leaving? Gal. 1:18.

5. THE EFFECT OF PAUL'S ADDRESS.

Acts 22: 22-29.

(1) Apostle Interrupted by Cry of the People.—

Acts 22: 22-23.

(22) And they gave him audience unto this word; and they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. (23) And as they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air.

"Unto this word." The audience listened to Paul's arguments, which were conclusive and unanswerable. They were impatient and could hardly wait until Paul would utter some word that would stir the smoldering fire into a blaze. This was done when Paul made this public confession and in the very place where the sin was committed, the putting to death of Stephen. This angered them as when Stephen himself made his speech, and when Paul uttered that hated word "Gentile," the old hatred

manifested itself and the people lifted up their voices and said, "Away with this fellow from the earth." The Jews would not believe in God's mercy to the Gentiles. This man was no longer permitted to preach to the people whom he loved, and by rejecting him, they rejected as a nation again, Jesus. They claimed that he was not even fit to preach and must die.

QUESTIONS.

Why were the people so angry?

They became enraged when he claimed that he was authorized by God to save the Gentiles.

What confession does Paul make concerning the persecution and death of Stephen?

Why throw dust into the air?

This is an expression of violence, uncontrollable passion, as if they must throw something at him. The mob is howling, yelling, gnashing with their teeth.

(2) Paul and Chief Captain.—Acts 22: 24-29.

(24) The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, bidding that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know for what cause they so shouted against him. (25) And when they had tied him up with (or, for) the thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? (26) And when the centurion heard it, he went to the chief captain and told him, saying, What art thou about to do? for this man is a Roman. (27) And the chief captain came and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? And he said, Yea. (28) And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this citizenship. And Paul said, But I am a Roman born. (29) They then that were about to examine him straightway departed from him: and the chief captain also was afraid when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

At the time of this great excitement the chief captain, who with the soldiers had charge of him, brought him into the castle. They may not have understood one word of the speech, and anxious to know the cause of this violence, commanded to have him scourged that he might make his confession. Paul had said, when speaking to his brethren,

"I am a Jew and God led me into the light by a devout Jew in Damascus," but this had no weight with the Jews. Paul was now in the castle with the heathens, and after he had been bound, and everything made ready for his cruel beating, he said to the centurion who stood by, "I am a Roman; is it lawful for you to scourge a Roman uncondemned?" The officer went immediately and brought the chief captain, who asked Paul, "Art thou a Roman?" and he answered, "Yes." At once the thongs were opened, chains taken off. The Apostle was not beaten and the officers trembled, because he was a Roman and they had bound him.

QUESTIONS.

Meaning of "examined by scourging"?

The chief captain, commander of the regiment of Roman soldiers, was on duty in Jerusalem. He could not understand the address and only judged his speech by the effect it had on the people, and thus supposed Paul a great offender. Scourging was the means used to compel prisoners to confess their crime.

Why did they bind Paul?

Preparatory to the severe punishment ordered.

What was the value of Paul's Roman citizenship?

How had the chief captain obtained his freedom?

Not by being a Roman by birth, as Paul; it was necessary for him to purchase his freedom.

What effect had this on those who examined Paul?

6. PAUL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM.

Acts 22: 30 to 23: 10.

(30) But on the morrow, desiring to know the certainty whereof he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him, and commanded the chief priests and all the council to come together, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

(1) And Paul, looking stedfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day.

(2) And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. (3) Then said Paul unto him,

God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? (4) And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? (5) And Paul said, I knew not, brethren, that he was high priest: for it is written, (Ex. 22:28) Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people. (6) But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. (7) And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. (8) For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. (9) And there arose a great clamor: and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' part stood up, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel? (10) And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the castle.

The chief captain, very anxious to know why Paul was arrested by Jews, commanded the Sanhedrim to assemble and brought Paul in before them. He was now before the same council that passed judgment upon Jesus, and upon Stephen, and now he had this one more opportunity. It was their last chance to receive or reject the truth. Paul was not here by himself. God led him step by step, and now he stood before the supreme court of the Jewish nation. Paul, as he eagerly looked at the people thus assembled, said, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." The moderator of this council, the High Priest, ordered Paul to be smitten on the mouth. Paul called the High Priest a whited wall, and invoked God to smite him. "Such a man is not fit to sit in judgment, who commands me to be smitten, contrary to law. God's High Priest and a law-breaker,—a man in white robes? I heard his voice; surely it could not be the voice of the High Priest, and therefore I did not know him. The man now holding the High Priest's office is not worthy of it,

and therefore I spoke evil of him as a ruler, I spoke of him as a tyrant, and one who can not claim to be the ruler of his people. People who hold these high official positions can only expect people to do honor to them when they honor the position." Paul realized the fact that he could not win the council as a whole. He was disturbed. He perceived that the council was made up of Pharisees and Sadducees. He appealed to the Pharisees, and said, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. Of the hope of the resurrection of the dead I am called in question." The other party believed the very opposite,—that "there is no resurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit." Immediately the scribes, who were the Pharisees, arose and earnestly protested that "we find no evil in this man, and if he has been spoken to by an Angel or Spirit let us not be among those who fight against God." This created great trouble between the two parties, of which Paul seemed to be the cause, and for fear that Paul might be harmed, the chief captain, who knew Paul to be a Roman, was bound to protect him, and rescued him from the difficulty between the two Jewish factions.

QUESTIONS.

Why take him before the council?

That he might know the precise charge against him from the Jews.

What saved him from being scourged?

Who was the High Priest and what was his command?

What did Paul call Ananias and why?

Why not know it was the High Priest?

The High Priest's conduct and character was such that he could be High Priest only in name, and not be the High Priest as authorized by the Bible.

What did the Pharisees and Sadducees believe?

What did the chief captain learn was the Jewish charge against Paul?

What did the captain do when the trouble arose between the Pharisees and Sadducees?

7. PAUL'S VISION, JEWISH CONSPIRACY, AND REMOVAL TO CÆSAREA.

Acts 23: 11-35.

(1) Paul Cheered by a Vision.—Acts 23: 11.

(11) And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

Lysias, the chief captain, was disappointed in having Paul brought before the council, in not being able to learn the truth about Paul's case. These enemies were not willing to formulate specific charges against him.

Paul was brought into the castle again, having made such an earnest effort to speak to his own people in Jerusalem, and both times he addressed his people he had to be rescued by Roman soldiers. Had his efforts been in vain? Had he been forgotten by his Leader? Was he all alone now in what he was doing? Under these circumstances Paul needed some one to stand by him and give him courage. Two days had passed since Paul had been arrested. How his heart bled for the condition of his brethren who were groping their way in darkness! His career for preaching the Gospel among the Jews and Gentiles seems, from a human point of view, to be closed. But the Apostle found Him, whom prison walls and iron gates can not hinder from companionship. Paul prayed in the castle and the Lord Himself stood by him in that dark hour, when every door seemed to be closed against his further work for Christ. Paul had stood for Christ and now the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Paul was not a prisoner of the Jews, not a prisoner of the chief captain, but he was a prisoner of the Lord. His final goal was Rome, and he "as my prisoner will have my protection until I want him with me in Glory." Ambassador for Christ, the Lord never forgets His servant,

and is ready to stand by him and give him courage and open his way when human hands lock all doors against him.

QUESTIONS.

When had he the vision?

Why did he need encouragement?

What did the Lord say to him? and was the promise fulfilled?

(2) Conspiracy of Jews to Kill Paul.—Acts 23: 12-17.

(12) And when it was day, the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. (13) And they were more than forty that made this conspiracy. (14) And they came to the chief priests and the elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. (15) Now therefore do ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you, as though ye would judge of his case more exactly: and we, before he comes near, are ready to slay him. (16) But Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, and he came and entered into the castle and told Paul. (17) And Paul called unto him one of the centurions, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain; for he hath something to tell him.

“When it was day.” This conspiracy revealed the religious condition of the Jewish nation. At the very time when the Lord was speaking to Paul in the prison and encouraging him, telling him that he must go to Rome, more than forty had taken a vow that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. This murderous intent was not a plot made by forty vagabond Jews of the lowest type, but by Jews who had influence with the Sanhedrim, and the Sanhedrim became a party with these forty in plotting the death of the Apostle. They were to invite Paul to appear before the council, to give them an opportunity to put him to death. A conspiracy so desperate, and known by so many people, was difficult to keep secret. From the narrative (Acts 23: 21) we learn that the Sanhedrim had

actually asked Lysias to have Paul brought before the council, to which he had consented. But before he had fulfilled the promise, the secret became known. Paul's sister's son had learned of the evil intent of the Jews, and immediately informed his uncle Paul, who requested the centurion to accompany the young man to the chief captain, who had a message for him.

QUESTIONS.

How many made the vow, and what was it?

Did these forty do what they had vowed?

How did Paul's nephew obtain the secret?

This young man may have been a student, receiving instructions in the schools at Jerusalem, and may have heard the scheme mentioned. While Paul was in prison his friends had the privilege to visit him.

What instruction did Paul give the centurion?

(3) Conspiracy Made Known to Chief Captain, and Paul Sent to Cæsarea.—Acts 23: 18-25.

(18) So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and saith, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and asked me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say to thee. (19) And the chief captain took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, What is it that thou hast to tell me? (20) And he said, The Jews have agreed to ask thee to bring down Paul tomorrow unto the council, as though thou wouldest inquire somewhat more exactly concerning him. (21) Do not thou therefore yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, who have bound themselves under a curse, neither to eat nor to drink till they have slain him: and now are they ready, looking for the promise from thee. (22) So the chief captain let the young man go, charging him, Tell no man that thou hast signified these things to me. (23) And he called unto him two of the centurions, and said, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go as far as Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night: (24) and he bade them provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor. (25) And he wrote a letter after this form:

The centurion at once accompanied the boy to Lysias, who informed him about the plot. He dismissed the youth and charged him not to reveal to anyone what he had told them. He called to him two centurions, bidding them to have ready by that evening, at nine o'clock, a large force of soldiers, so that Paul, the prisoner, might be taken with safety unto Felix, the governor at Cæsarea. This gives us some idea of the strong efforts put forth, by the angry Jews, to put him to death, when the company that took the prisoner out of Jerusalem numbered four hundred and seventy men.

QUESTIONS.

What was the reason for the embarrassment of the chief captain?

He desired to hold the good will of the Jewish nation, but it was his duty to see that the prisoner received justice as a Roman citizen.

Why charge the young man not to make known his visit to the captain?

How many centurions and what their duty?

How many soldiers and why?

The condition was serious, as the conspiracy had the sanction of the Jewish church.

What about the Christian church in Jerusalem at this time?

The church had been, for some time, so strongly influenced by the Jewish law and traditions that from henceforth she continued to grow less spiritual, and more in favor of temple service. In the year A. D. 70 the Jewish temple, which influenced many to keep to the old forms, was destroyed. The Jews fell under the severe persecution of the Romans; their central point of worship being destroyed, they became and remained a scattered nation.

How far was it to Cæsarea?

About fifty miles northwest of Jerusalem.

(4) Paul Sent to the Governor at Cæsarea.—Acts 23: 26-35.

(26) Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix, greeting. (27) This man was seized by the Jews, and was about to be slain of them, when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. (28) And de-

siring to know the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him down unto their council: (29) whom I found to be accused about questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. (30) And when it was shown to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to thee forthwith, charging his accusers also to speak against him before thee.

(31) So the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. (32) But on the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: (33) and they, when they came to Cæsarea and delivered the letter to the governor, presented Paul also before him. (34) And when he had read it, he asked of what province he was; and when he understood that he was of Cilicia, (35) I will hear thee fully, said he, when thine accusers also are come: and he commanded him to be kept in Herod's palace (or Prætorium).

The chief captain, after having completed arrangements to send Paul to Cæsarea, wrote a letter to the governor giving full information concerning the prisoner. "The Jews would have put him to death, had it not been that we rescued him," The civil officer put himself on record that the Jewish church was persecuting Paul when there was no sufficient cause. The Jews now would have an opportunity to make their charges against Paul before the governor.

The soldiers started in the evening from Jerusalem and brought Paul, during the night, to Antipatris. The following day the seventy horsemen continued the journey with Paul, and the four hundred soldiers returned to Jerusalem. Upon arrival the governor received the letter, and after reading it asked Paul of what province he was. This he did in order to learn whether he had jurisdiction over the case; and when he learned that he was of Cilicia, the governor promised to hear the case as soon as Paul's accusers would arrive. In the meantime Paul should be kept in Herod's judgment hall, a place built by Herod the Great, at that time the official residence of the Roman governor. The Apostle was not cast into prison, but was kept in the building attached to the palace.

QUESTIONS.

- Why send a letter to the governor?
 Was the information by the civil officer for or against Paul?
 What law referred to in verse 29?
 How many soldiers accompanied him to Antipatris?
 How many from there to Cæsarea?
 What question did the governor ask Paul?
 Who was Felix and when appointed?

He was appointed governor by Emperor Claudius A. D. 52. He was married to Drusilla, the sister of Agrippa, 24: 24. He was a wicked governor and would do anything to gain popular favor.

8. PAUL'S TRIAL BEFORE FELIX, AND TWO YEARS' IMPRISONMENT.

Acts 24: 1-27.

(1) Charges Against Paul by Jews from Jerusalem.—

Acts 24: 1-9.

(1) And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with certain elders, and with an orator, one Tertullus; and they informed the governor against Paul. (2) And when he was called, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying,

Seeing that by thee we enjoy much peace, and that by thy providence evils are corrected for this nation, (3) we accept it in all ways and in all places, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. (4) But that I be not further tedious unto thee, I entreat thee to hear us of thy clemency a few words. (5) For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world (Gr. the inhabited earth), and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: (6) who moreover assayed to profane the temple: on whom also we laid hold: [(7) But the chief captain Lysias came, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, (8) commanding his accusers to come before thee] from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself, to take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him.

(9) And the Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that these things were so.

The Jews had rejected Jesus Christ, the Messiah, had put Him to death, and God, by His power, raised Him

from the dead. Before the Ascension of Jesus He commissioned the disciples, that after their reception of the Holy Spirit they should present Him to the Jews as their Savior. A few received Him, but as a nation they rejected Him, and put to death Stephen, who thus became the first Christian martyr. From time to time the Jews showed themselves unworthy as God's favored people. They were given the last opportunity when the Apostle Paul made his visit to Jerusalem the last time, and because of the deep love he had for his countrymen, on two occasions he appealed to his brethren to accept Him who died for them. They fell upon him, and would have put him to death, but he was rescued by the chief captain. When in prison the Lord stood by him and encouraged him, showing to him that he should now leave them to their fate and go forth in his work as the Apostle of the Gentiles and He would journey with him to Rome. The Jews as a nation, having refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah, lost their religious standing in the world, which is set forth in this period by Luke. The same failure concerning the Jews as a nation, in laying hold of their God-given possibilities, is presented in a number of passages by the different writers in the New Testament. Many of these writers belonged to the same nation, and were deeply affected by this failure, yet writing under the direction of the Holy Spirit, set forth these facts in a way that they can not be misunderstood. We have for some time been in a period of transition. The historian has given quite an extensive account of the facts in this period of the conduct of the Jewish nation, showing themselves unworthy of Divine favor; and therefore when Paul went forth from Jerusalem the Lord journeyed with him and God's Divine favor was transferred from the Jews to the Gentile world. No wonder Luke gave such a detailed account of the origin of this transfer in chapters 6-11.

Paul was in the Roman court at Cæsarea. If the Jews had not pressed the matter he would have been released by

the governor, because there were no charges presented that would have convicted him. Paul was at Cæsarea at least five days before a committee appointed by the Sanhedrim, with the High Priest as leader and Tertullus, a Roman, a paid attorney, arrived. Paul was then brought into the hall of judgment, and Tertullus, the attorney who represented the Sanhedrim, stated the charges against Paul to the court. The first thing Luke gives us is the method the orator used in getting on the good side of the court by flattery. The Sanhedrim had no confidence in this wicked man to whom they appealed, but their purpose was to accomplish their ends, no matter whether the methods were right or wrong. After thus trying to secure the ear of the governor, he proceeded to present three charges against Paul. (1) "He is a pestilent fellow and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world; (2) He is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes; (3) He has gone about to profane the temple.

"We would have disposed of this case ourselves and not troubled you, as we were just in the act of disposing of the case when Lysias, the chief captain, came upon us, and by violence took him out of our hands. Had it not been for that interference we would have judged him according to our law and it would have saved this unnecessary trouble for you as governor. At the same time it would have made it unnecessary for us to make this journey and be before you at this time. This case should have been settled at Jerusalem, and we should not have been obliged to send a deputy all the way from Jerusalem to Cæsarea."

QUESTIONS.

Who was the High Priest?

How long until the accusers arrived from Jerusalem? 24:1.

The five days should be reckoned from the time that Paul was apprehended at Jerusalem. Luke says Paul was apprehended when the seven days of his vow were nearly ended (21:27). In order to reconcile the statement in this verse with verse 11 it is best to make the apprehension on the fifth day

after his arrival at Jerusalem. The next day, the sixth, he was presented before the Sanhedrim. The night of the sixth he was taken to Antipatris, and on the seventh he arrived at Cæsarea. Five days after his arrival would be the twelfth day after his arrival at Jerusalem, when the charges were made against him before Felix.

Why did they need an orator, and who was he?

Why flatter the governor?

State the three charges made against Paul.

(2) Paul Replies to the Charges.—Acts 24: 10-21.

(10) And when the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, Paul answered,

Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I cheerfully make my defence: (11) seeing that thou canst take knowledge that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem: (12) and neither in the temple did they find me disputing with any man or stirring up a crowd, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city. (13) Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me. (14) But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets; (15) having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for (or, accept), that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust. (16) Herein (or, on this account) I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men always. (17) Now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings: (18) amidst which (or, in presenting which) they found me purified in the temple, with no crowd, nor yet with tumult: but there were certain Jews from Asia—(19) who ought to have been here before thee, and to make accusation, if they had aught against me. (20) Or else let these men themselves say what wrong-doing they found when I stood before the council, (21) except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day.

When Tertullus had made his charge against Paul before Felix, the Jews whom he represented fully endorsed the statement of their lawyer. This was the third time that the Apostle, during his missionary labors, had the opportunity of addressing persons holding high official po-

sitions. He had spoken before Gallio, the deputy of Achaia, and Sergius Paulus, and received favor from both. The first charge was that of sedition. The governor before whom he spoke had held his office for seven years, and was well acquainted with the history of this nation. He had no knowledge during these years of Paul being engaged in any insurrections. "The time is too short for the things to have occurred with which they have charged me. It is but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship, and five of these I have spent here in Roman custody. The time would not have been sufficient if I had wanted to do what they charge me with. The purpose for which I went to Jerusalem was to worship. During that time I did not congregate a crowd, neither did I dispute openly to incite the Jews in the synagogue, nor in the city." He closed his argument by saying to the court, "The things they charge me with they can not prove."

The second charge against Paul was that of heresy. In answer to the second charge, he admitted that after the way they call heresy, he did worship the God of his fathers. He believed the same Scriptures, and had the faith that the Pharisees claimed to have, of the Resurrection of the just and the unjust. Here the accusers devised the phrase, "sect of the Nazarene," which it was unjust to charge Paul with, because he worshiped the God of the Jews. Paul here insisted on the essential likeness between his faith and that of Judaism. He did this because it was true and because it gave him shelter under the Roman law. It tolerated Judaism, and Paul's religion was built on the teaching of the Law and the Prophets, and therefore not a new religion, but a development absolutely in harmony with the teaching of the old. Paul meant to say on this point that surely, within a very few days, there had been a great change of sentiment in Jerusalem. "The Pharisees themselves, less than a week ago, defended me before the council. The very charge they make now is contrary to their

own defense in Jerusalem." Paul believed the law, recognized Him to whom the law pointed, had great reverence for it and called it glorious (2 Cor. 3: 7). He also believed in the Prophets, because in the study of the Prophets, he found them pointing to Jesus whom he preached, and speaking of God His Father raising Him from the dead. It must be understood that it was not Paul who was violating God's book, but it was the Pharisees. "Now these Pharisees who defended me before the council, ought to be here themselves to present their objection, if they hold anything against me. Or else let these who stand right here tell positively what evil I did, unless it be that I stood and said before the council that I believed in the Resurrection of the dead."

The third charge—sacrilege. In answering the third charge, the Apostle clearly showed that instead of trying to disgrace the temple he had had great reverence for it for many years. "And because of my reverence for the temple I have brought alms and offerings. The alms were for my nation, which I loved, and at the time of my arrest I was bringing my offerings to the temple and engaged in one of the most solemn rites presented by the Jewish law. Instead of polluting the temple of God I was complying with the law, purifying it; I associated with but a few and not with the crowd. When in the act of obeying the law, some Jews from Asia brought about the disturbance, and they are the persons who ought to be here before the court and make their objections, if they have any charge against me. They are the only witnesses and they are not here. These who are here can testify only as to what happened about my conduct before the Sanhedrim." Therefore the Sanhedrim had no right to present any charge against the prisoner only as to his conduct before them. And the entire matter charged against him must be that he raised his voice in favor of the Resurrection,—the very faith held by the Pharisees themselves.

QUESTIONS.

What was the point in his introduction?

Paul founded the plea on the justice of his cause and on the fact that Felix had had so much experience in the affairs of Judea, that he was well qualified to understand the merits of the case and to judge impartially.

How long was Felix governor?

Felix was judge in Jerusalem and Judea for a period of about seven years.

What was his answer to the charge of sedition?

What was his argument to that of leading a sect?

Paul acknowledged the fact but denied it to be heresy. He gave three reasons why his way of worship was not heresy: (1) Because he worshiped the same God that his accusers worshiped, and as a Jew, he was true to God. (2) He held to Jewish law and prophecy, while he did not agree with many interpretations of them. Christ and his Gospel fulfilled did not annul them. (3) He believed in the Resurrection of the dead, and immortal life, just as the Pharisees did who accused him. Paul confirmed his position by his sincere desire to do right.

What was his answer to the charge of sacrilege?

On some of his visits he came for the purpose of bringing alms and offerings, and therefore had no thought of profaning the temple.

(3) The Two Years in Prison in Cæsarea.—Acts 24: 22-27.

(22) But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain (or, military tribune; Gr. chiliarch) shall come down, I will determine your matter. (23) And he gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him.

(24) But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife (Gr. his own wife), who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. (25) And as he reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me. (26) He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul: wherefore also he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. (27) But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds.

Felix, the governor, was already acquainted with the Jewish people and knew something about their belief in Christ. Now having received by Paul's address a more perfect knowledge, and while nothing had yet been proved against Paul, yet the governor did not release him. The governor showed, by the liberty he granted him in holding him as a prisoner, that the things testified against him could not be true, but gave as a reason for holding him, that when Lysias, the chief captain, would come down, he could then learn if there was any information he had not already presented. Lysias had already testified in the letter. If this judge had been righteous the Apostle would have been set free. The governor, really unwilling to give offense to the Jews, simply gave this as an excuse to hold him to keep the good-will of the nation. Paul had the privilege as a prisoner to receive visitors who were his friends and wished to administer to his wants. We do not know that Lysias ever made this statement before the governor, and the decision for his case was put off about two years. Some time during this period of two years, Felix, who was married to Drusilla—a daughter of Agrippa I., who slew James, and a sister of Herod Agrippa II. (26: 1)—sent for Paul that he might speak to them about the faith in Christ. Paul, no doubt, knew the kind of characters he had before him. Herod was a wicked man, married to this divorced Drusilla. As Paul spoke to these people of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, it had its influence. It made a man like Felix tremble as Paul pictured to him temperance and self-control, and the judgment that every man must meet. And why should he not tremble, listening to such a sermon as Paul could preach? Yet, while his heart was touched, he made the same excuse that thousands are making to-day, who prefer not to change their conduct, by saying, "Go thy way, . . . I will call for thee."

Why did Felix continue to hold Paul as a prisoner? Here the reason is fully stated why he held him. He knew

the prisoner was not guilty, and at different times, no doubt, he talked to Paul and offered to release him upon receiving certain sums of money. The preacher of righteousness could not be a party to such unrighteous proceeding. So at the close of the two years Felix was recalled, and Paul remained a prisoner, that the governor might continue to have the friendship of the Jews.

QUESTIONS.

Give meaning of "When Felix heard."

What excuse did he give for the delay?

What liberty did he grant him?

In what did he have more perfect knowledge?

Felix knew more than most Roman rulers about Christianity.

Who was Drusilla? 24: 24.

9. PAUL BEFORE FESTUS AND AGRIPPA.

Acts 25: 1-27.

(1) Zeal of Jews Against Paul.—Acts 25: 1-5.

(1) Festus therefore, having come into the province (or, having entered upon his province), after three days went up to Jerusalem from Cæsarea. (2) And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they besought him, (3) asking a favor against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem; laying a plot to kill him on the way. (4) Howbeit Festus answered, that Paul was kept in charge at Cæsarea, and that he himself was about to depart thither shortly. (5) Let them therefore, saith he, that are of power among you go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man, let them accuse him.

Felix was recalled and Festus appointed governor, about A. D. 60. Three days after his arrival at Cæsarea he went up to Jerusalem. The Jews had not forgotten their angry feeling against Paul. The High Priest and his associates renewed their charge against Paul, and desired that the governor would bring him from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, in order that the same might come to a speedy settlement. Their real object in trying to work the governor was that

this band of murderers might lie in wait, and that when the governor brought Paul into Jerusalem they could fall upon him and put him to death.

The governor, however, would be glad to please the Jews, yet could not transgress the Roman law. Paul would be kept at Cæsarea and his purpose was to return shortly. He invited those who had charges against Paul to accompany him to Cæsarea and lay their charges before the court and it would there be decided if he had committed any crime.

QUESTIONS.

How long was he at Cæsarea before going to Jerusalem?

Why go to Jerusalem?

He went to Jerusalem to acquaint himself with the motives and work of the leaders of the Jewish church.

What did the Jews ask Festus to do?

What did Festus require of them?

(2) Trial before Festus and Appeal to Cæsar.—

Acts 25: 6-12.

(6) And when he had tarried among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea; and on the morrow he sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded Paul to be brought. (7) And when he was come, the Jews that had come down from Jerusalem stood round about him, bringing against him many and grievous charges which they could not prove; (8) while Paul said in his defence, Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Cæsar, have I sinned at all. (9) But Festus, desiring to gain favor with the Jews, answered Paul and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? (10) But Paul said, I am standing before Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest. (11) If then I am a wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if none of those things is true whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up (Gr. grant me by favor) unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar. (12) Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar: unto Cæsar shalt thou go.

The governor remained in Jerusalem just about ten days, and the very next day after reaching Cæsarea, Paul was put on trial before him. The Jews who had accompanied Festus, by invitation, from Jerusalem, stood round about him. These were the most influential men in Palestine, making charges against one man, and very grievous charges, which they could not prove. The Apostle at once answered to the same charges he had answered before Felix,—heresy, sacrilege and sedition. He made a positive statement that he was innocent of every charge made against him. The governor knew that Paul had not committed any crime of which the Roman law could convict him. He therefore, in order to please the Jews, desired to grant their wish that Paul should be transferred to Jerusalem and make his answer on the charges of heresy, sacrilege, and sedition, and there Festus would see that Paul got a fair trial.

Festus himself knew that he would not get a fair trial, that the Jews were biased; and this gives us an opportunity to know the character of the man before whom Paul appeared to be judged. Paul asserted his rights before Festus as a Roman citizen, and that he desired to be judged before a Roman tribunal. He declared before the judge that he himself knew that he had done nothing wrong to the Jews who brought these charges. "Now, if anybody could show that I have done evil or am a criminal, and that my crime is worthy of death, I would not refuse to die. But when there are none of these things true that they accuse me of, no governor has a right to deliver me over to them. As a Roman citizen I appeal unto Cæsar." Paul made his appeal unto Cæsar, and if his appeal were granted the case would be taken entirely out of the hands of the present governor. This must have been a surprise to the Jews as well as the governor—the turn taken by the Apostle in taking the case entirely out of their hands. The appeal was granted by the governor.

QUESTIONS.

How long was he at Jerusalem?

The text should read, "Not more than eight or ten days."

When was the trial?

What was the defense of Paul?

Name the three charges Paul answered here.

Why ask him to go to Jerusalem?

Festus was willing to have a man put to death unjustly simply to gain the favor of the Jewish nation.

Why did he not deliver him to the Jews?

Because he had appealed to Cæsar, which would give him an opportunity to make his journey to Rome as he had predicted.

Give meaning of "I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat."

He justified himself in refusing to be taken away to Jerusalem for trial. This was the appointed capital of the province where the courts were properly held.

What was the purpose of the conference?

(3) Consultation Between Festus and Agrippa.—

Acts 25: 13-22.

(13) Now when certain days were passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Cæsarea, and saluted (or, having saluted) Festus. (14) And as they tarried there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix; (15) about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, asking for sentence against him. (16) To whom I answered, that it is not the custom of the Romans to give up any man, before that the accused have the accusers face to face, and have had opportunity to make his defence concerning the matter laid against him. (17) When therefore they were come together here, I made no delay, but on the next day sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought. (18) Concerning whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of such evil things as I supposed; (19) but had certain questions against him of their own religion (or, superstition), and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. (20) And I, being perplexed how to inquire concerning these things, asked whether he would go to Jerusalem and there be judged of these matters. (21) But when Paul had appealed to be kept for the decision of the emperor (Gr.

the Augustus), I commanded him to be kept till I should send him to Cæsar. (22) And Agrippa said unto Festus, I also could wish (or, was wishing) to hear the man myself. Tomorrow, saith he, thou shalt hear him.

Shortly after Festus was appointed governor of Judea, Agrippa II., and his sister Bernice paid the governor a visit at Cæsarea. This Agrippa was the only son of Herod Agrippa I., who put to death the Apostle James in Jerusalem, afterwards went to Cæsarea, and because of his wickedness Divine judgment visited him and he died about the year A. D. 44. When his father died Agrippa II. was in Rome, but being only about seventeen years of age he was too young to be appointed governor over the territory ruled by his father. He was however at the death of his uncle, six years later, appointed king of Chalcis, a small territory east of the river Jordan. After these visitors had been with Festus for some days, Festus presented Paul's case to the king in order to receive his opinion about the matter. It was about time for the prisoner to be sent to Cæsar; the charges against Paul had reference only to the Jewish law, and Festus was still in the dark concerning the proper statement to make to the emperor at Rome. Agrippa being well acquainted with the Jewish nation and their religion, the governor sought the advice of the king to assist him to formulate charges.

Festus had presented to the king the efforts made by the Jews to bring judgment against Paul. He declared that the accused must be brought face to face with the accuser, the Roman law must be satisfied, and the individual must have an opportunity to answer himself for the crime. Festus gave the king a history of the trial; the accusations of the Jews were entirely different from what he had supposed, and the only thing that they presented against him was of their own superstition concerning one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. "And when I asked the prisoner if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and answer these charges at the Jewish court,

he made an appeal to be tried at Cæsar's court; and I commanded him to be kept until I might send him to Cæsar." Agrippa became interested in the matter and requested to have an opportunity to hear him speak. His request was granted.

QUESTIONS.

Who are King Agrippa and Bernice?

He is King Agrippa II., in his twenty-third year; he was permitted to succeed his father's youngest brother in the kingdom of Chalcis. Four years later he was removed by Claudius from Chalcis and given the two Tetrarchies that had formerly been in the hands of Philip and Lysanias (Luke 3:1). He also was given control of the temple and its treasury and the power of appointing and displacing the high priest. The Early Church knew nothing but persecution at his hands. His great-grandfather, Herod the Great, doomed the infant Christ. His grandfather, Herod-Antipas, slew John the Baptist. His father killed James the Apostle, and intended to take the life of Peter also.

Bernice was a sister of this Agrippa, and of Drusilla (24:24). She had been married to her uncle Herod, formerly king of Chalcis, but he had died, and she was still a widow. Agrippa and Bernice, being Jews by birth, were better able to understand Paul's case than was Festus.

What was Festus' opinion as to the charges?

Why did Agrippa wish to hear Paul?

(4) Paul Brought Before Festus and Agrippa.—

Acts 25: 23-27.

(23) So on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and they were entered into the place of hearing with the chief captains and the principal men of the city, at the command of Festus Paul was brought in. (24) And Festus saith, King Agrippa, and all men who are here present with us, ye behold this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews made suit to me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. (25) But I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death: and as he himself appealed to the emperor I determined to send him. (26) Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I may have somewhat to write. (27) For it seemeth to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not withal to signify the charges against him.

Festus had asked Agrippa for advice, but before Agrippa was willing to give the advice he wanted to hear Paul recite the facts. Paul had often spoken before the public, but before such an audience Paul had never spoken. A king, a princess, a Roman governor, the military officers and the principal men of the city. Was Paul able to set forth the facts clearly before such a distinguished audience as he was asked to address? The following statement Festus made when he introduced the speaker: "This man is not charged by a few, but all the Jews have appealed to me that he ought not, for what he has done, live any longer. Upon careful examination into the case, I find that he has committed nothing worthy of death. And when he suggested that he be given a hearing before the Jewish tribunal, Paul, as a Roman citizen, appealed to be tried at a Roman court. And we have granted his appeal and have determined to send him. And now since we have decided to send him, I have not been able to formulate charges and therefore have brought him before you, and especially before you as a king, that after you have carefully examined into the matter, you might inform me what to write. Agrippa, being a Jewish king, ought to be able to set forth charges, after hearing the case, so that the prisoner may be sent forth with specific charges."

QUESTIONS.

Meaning "with great pomp"?

These children, son and daughter of Herod-Agrippa I., made this pompous appearance (great parade) in that very city where a few years before their father was smitten by the angel of God, and eaten of worms (12: 23).

Who was present at this conference?

What was the place of hearing?

An audience chamber in the palace of Festus. This was not a trial of Paul; he could only be tried in Rome, as he had appealed unto Cæsar.

What was it that seemed unreasonable to Festus?

10. ADDRESS BEFORE THE ROYAL COURT.

Acts 26: 1-29.

(1) The Introduction.—Acts 26: 1-3.

(1) And Agrippa saith unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defence:

(2) I think myself happy, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defence before thee this day touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews: (3) especially because thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

The king now gave the Apostle permission to speak. The Apostle stretched forth his hand, and was able to speak for himself. He no doubt was somewhat annoyed by the lengthy introduction Festus made when he presented him to the audience. The address here is somewhat the same as the one he had delivered to the Jews on the stairs when he was arrested in Jerusalem. The Apostle was in chains, still held as a prisoner, but counted himself happy. His happiness consisted in being able to present his Lord and the Gospel that was committed to him, to such an audience. "And especially that I can set the facts before you concerning the things whereof I am accused. And I know you to be well acquainted with the Jewish teaching and customs. Therefore I hope you will patiently bear with me in setting forth these facts in their order."

QUESTIONS.

Who granted Paul permission to speak?

Why say "I think myself happy"?

It was a pleasure for him to speak in his own defense, and especially to deliver his own testimony of Christ in the presence of the king.

Why did he appeal to Agrippa's patience?

He understood the character of his audience, and his purpose was to set forth clearly, in rather a lengthy discourse, his claim for the Christian religion.

(2) His Life Among the Jews.—Acts 26: 4-8.

(4) My manner of life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; (5) having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. (6) And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; (7) unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O king! (8) Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?

He had lived as a Pharisee, which was well known to the Jews, and was not only a Pharisee but one of the most careful in the study of the law and the carrying of it into effect. "And the Jewish nation, if they were willing, knowing me as they did, could testify to these facts; and now this day I stand here and am judged because I was faithful to the hope of the promise made by God unto our fathers. Now the faithfulness of this hope is the real cause of my being a prisoner here this day. In order to obtain this hope the twelve tribes served God day and night and for being in possession of this hope I stand here accused. Is it not strange that, considering what the Jews believe, they hold me as a prisoner? Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead? This hope in Him is based on Christ being raised to life, and if God doth raise the dead why should we not believe that He raised Jesus? and if He raised Jesus, has not the Crucified One become Christ?"

QUESTIONS.

Who knew Him from the beginning?

These expressions imply that he left his home in Tarsus very young to attend the school at Jerusalem and had for his teacher Gamaliel.

Give meaning of "straitest sect."

The most exact and rigorous in their interpretation of the law, and in enforcing ceremonial observances.

Where and what was the promise of our fathers?

This no doubt refers to the promise of the Messiah (13:32), and through Him, of the resurrection (23:6).

Why think it incredible?

(3) Paul's Opposition to the Church, and His Conversion.

Acts 26: 9-17.

(9) I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. (10) And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. (11) And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities. (12) Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, (13) at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. (14) And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the goad (Gr. goads). (15) And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. (16) But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; (17) delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee.

The Apostle Paul confessed that he at one time held religious views just like those of his brethren. "It was my purpose to suppress the work of 'Jesus,' and what I did is not a secret." Three new facts about the persecution of the Christians Paul stated, which took place after the death of Stephen. (1) Christians were put to death, (2) Christians were punished according to the Jewish custom in the presence of the judges who sat in the synagogue, (3) Persecution had extended to other cities besides Jerusalem. Instead of Paul taking the Christians and putting them to death, the power of God took hold of him and changed his

life. He was on his way to Damascus when he was stricken to the earth and the Heavenly Voice spoke to him, and Paul heard the voice. He did not recite the entire story of his conversion but referred to his commission as being Divine, and that he was to be a minister and witness to the people of the things that he had seen and heard.

QUESTIONS.

How could Paul think and do things contrary to the wish of Jesus?

Paul acknowledged himself to have been a persecutor and blasphemer, although in it he followed the guidance of his own conscience; and he stood in need of mercy for remission of those wicked acts.

What was the extent of his persecution?

Why had Jesus appeared to him?

(4) His Commission.—Acts 26: 18-23.

(18) To open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. (19) Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: (20) but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judæa, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. (21) For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me. (22) Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; (23) how that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.

Paul had received his commission when the Lord appeared unto him at the time of his conversion. By the special revelation he had received from the Lord the Gospel was to find its way to the Gentiles. The moment had come to give this Gospel message to the blind sinners who were sitting before him in the congregation. All the elements of the Gospel are really contained in verse 18. Even

the Jews themselves were under the power of Satan, and not until their eyes were opened could they receive forgiveness of sin. So the Apostle, if he wanted to be honest with these people, had to reveal the things he had seen and heard. It was for preaching Jesus that the Jews wanted to kill him, but by the hand of God he had been preserved until this day. "And I have never failed to witness, before poor and rich, small and great, in accordance with the teaching of the law and prophecy, that Christ should die and rise again from the dead, and be the light for all the people in the world."

In this paragraph he made a thrust at these Jews—that because he was obeying the commission of the risen Savior, the Jews caught him in the temple. "When I spoke in harmony with the teachings in the Scriptures of the coming of Christ." If the Jews claimed to love Moses and the Prophets, the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, then they must certainly accept the fruit that comes from the planting in the Old Testament.

QUESTIONS.

What was his special mission?

(1) To open their eyes; (2) to turn them from darkness to light; (3) to turn them from Satan unto God; (4) to bring forgiveness and inheritance.

Where did he have his heavenly vision?

Where did he begin his work?

Why did they arrest him?

Who is the first that rose from the dead?

(5) Conclusion.—Acts 26: 24-29.

(24) And as he thus made his defence, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad (Gr. turneth thee to madness). (25) But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness. (26) For the king knoweth of these things unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner. (27) King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou

believest. (28) And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou (or, in a little time thou, etc.) wouldest fain make me a Christian. (29) And Paul said, I would to God, that whether with little or with much (or, both in little and in great, i. e., in all respects), not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds.

As the minister was so earnestly setting forth the things of Jesus, appealing to the Old Testament as the foundation for what he had advanced, Festus, who was not able to comprehend the truths presented by the Apostle, became impatient and interrupted him by the rude remark, "Thou art beside thyself. Thy much learning hath turned thee to madness." This was not a serious charge by one so ignorant of the higher things as Festus was. The Lord during his ministry had also heard the same charge. The Apostle answered Festus and said that his words were not those of a person who does not know what he is saying, but the words of truth and soberness. Then Paul turned to the king, as one who was more familiar with the things that Paul was presenting. The things that Paul was setting forth before the public could not help being known to the king. The king was acquainted with Christ's suffering, His trial and His death, and therefore Paul turned to him with a question, "Believest thou the prophets?" Then Agrippa answered, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." He meant to say, "By a little more persuasion you might make me a Christian," or "Do you think you can make me a Christian by your speechmaking?" Paul answered and said, not only to the king but to all of them, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

He was asking God that these people might receive all the blessings that come through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but in his appeal he remembered the chains and would not want any others to be under such bonds as were put on him.

QUESTIONS.

What effect had his sermon on Festus?

He considered Paul as a visionary enthusiast, unbalanced in mind.

Why say, "much learning doth make thee mad"?

Much learning had turned his brain. The idea was suggested by his many allusions to Moses and the Prophets. Paul was an educated man of high order.

What was not done in a corner?

There was a wide knowledge of the facts connected with the preaching of the Gospel since the death and resurrection of Christ.

What question did he ask Agrippa? and what was his reply?

What special thing did he want his hearers to enjoy?

11. PAUL DECLARED INNOCENT.

Acts 26: 30-32.

(30) And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: (31) and when they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. (32) And Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

The Apostle expressed his great desire that they might be persuaded to accept Jesus Christ, and enjoy the hope that sustained him under all these trying circumstances; instead of their crowns and robes and offices, he wished they had a standing the same as his, humble though it seemed. The king and the audience then went aside, and their verdict was this: "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds." And the Roman officers declared, if Paul had not made his appeal to Cæsar he might have been set free. But we have seen before that this appeal to Rome was in accord with the will of the Lord. The Lord had promised Paul to be his Companion, and that no one would be permitted to harm him on his journey to Rome.

QUESTIONS.

Why not release Paul?

What was their decision?

What prediction was fulfilled in his persecution?

Give the principal points made by the Apostle in his address before Agrippa.

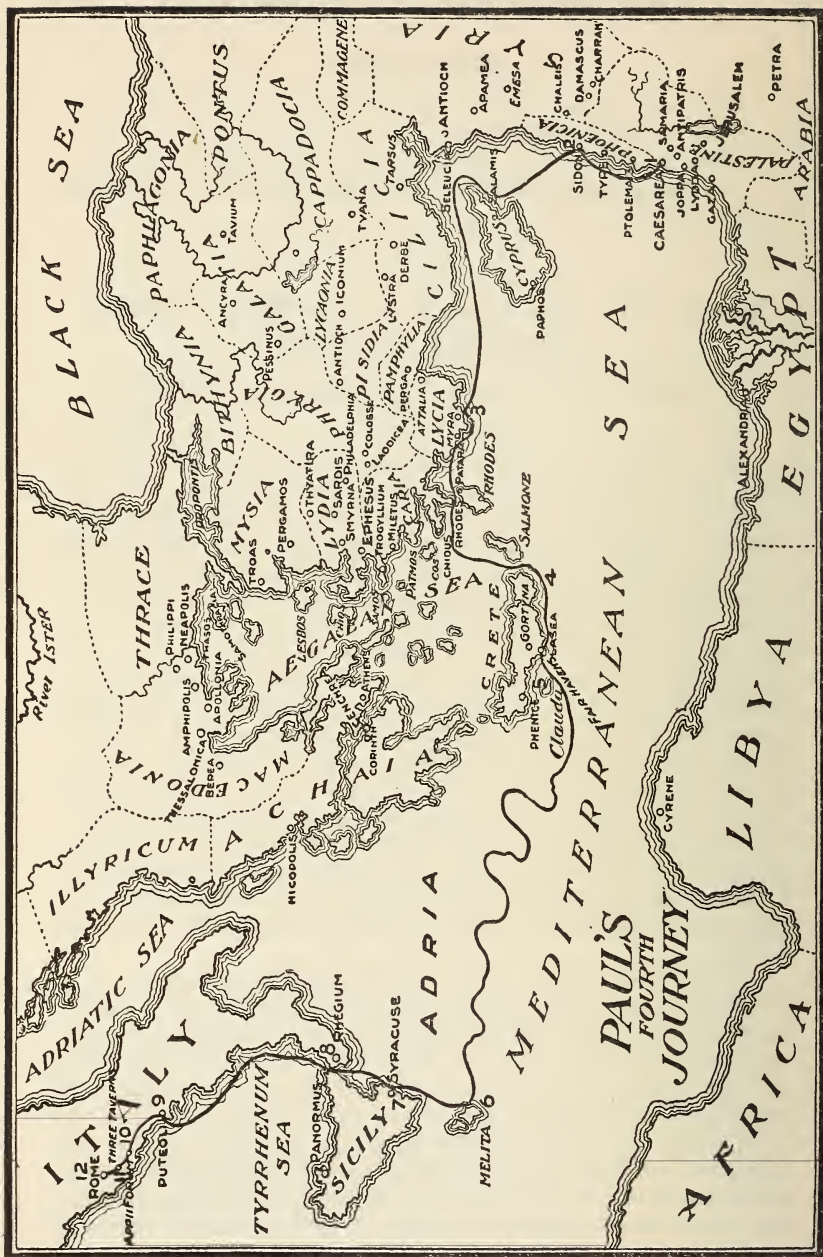
Section VI. The Gospel on the Way to Rome. Acts 27: 1 to 28: 16.

1. JOURNEY FROM CÆSAREA TO CRETE.

Acts 27: 1-12.

(1) And when it was determined that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the Augustan band. (2) And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia, we put to sea, Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. (3) And the next day we touched at Sidon: and Julius treated Paul kindly, and gave him leave to go unto his friends and refresh himself (Gr. receive attention). (4) And putting to sea from thence, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. (5) And when we had sailed across the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. (6) And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy; and he put us therein. (7) And when we had sailed slowly many days, and were come with difficulty over against Cnidus, the wind not further suffering us (or, suffering us to get there), we sailed under the lee of Crete, over against Salmone; (8) and with difficulty coasting along it we came unto a certain place called Fair Heavens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

(9) And when much time was spent, and the voyage was now dangerous, because the Fast was now already gone by, Paul admonished them, (10) and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives. (11) But the centurion gave more heed to the master and to the owner of the ship, than to those things which were spoken by Paul. (12) And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to put to sea from thence, if by any means they could reach Phœnix, and winter there; which is a haven of Crete, looking north-east.



and south-east (Gr. down the south-west wind and down the north-west wind).

The Apostle was always under the direction of Him for whom he labored. He was a chosen vessel, was commissioned as the Apostle of the Gentiles. As he came to the close of the third missionary journey the Lord laid it upon his heart to open a Gospel highway to Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire. Two years before his departure as a prisoner to Rome, held as a prisoner in Jerusalem by Lysias, the Lord visited him one night in prison, and gave him encouragement and told him that the plans he had made to carry the Gospel to Rome, would be carried into effect. The Jews as a nation had no use for him and rejected him. For two years he was in prison at Cæsarea. The old center for the spread of the Gospel could no longer be depended upon and a new western center must be made. We are about to bid farewell to the land that gave us the Bible and make a journey for the purpose of carrying the Gospel to Rome. Our historian is giving a very minute and graphic description, not of what Jesus began to do and teach while on earth, but what He is continuing to do and teach on this voyage to Rome, in establishing a new center from His place on the Throne.

The ship left Cæsarea. We are at the entrance of a new world. The Gospel began at Jerusalem, but it is to be continued from the center of the great political world, Rome. Paul, Luke, and Aristarchus sail forth on this important journey. The picture here given by Luke, of the contrary winds, the destructive waves, and the shipwreck; was just what the Gospel had to meet and will have to meet in her forward march in the conversion of the world. Just as the Apostle on this voyage was receiving directions concerning his journey, so the Lord's servants, who are true to the forward movement of the Gospel, are constantly in touch with Him who is the directing force and power of all Christian and missionary efforts.

Just as soon as a sufficient company of prisoners for Rome could be gathered to go under one officer, Paul was sent with them. There was a vessel about to start which would go as far as Myra, and they hoped to be able to get a vessel at that point for Italy. The prisoners were entrusted to the charge of Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. This was so named in honor of the Emperor. The following day after leaving Cæsarea they arrived at Sidon, where Paul and his associates had an opportunity to enjoy liberty and spend time with the good Christian people that lived at that place. You remember that he spent about a week at Tyre with the church people, on his way to Jerusalem. Men, women, and children accompanied him and they had a very impressive service before his departure. Here at Sidon, while the historian does not describe minutely what happened, Paul was refreshed and strengthened, and it was a great help to him after being in prison for two years at Cæsarea.

At really the beginning of this great voyage Paul had great influence over Julius, as was shown by the liberty granted him here at Sidon. On leaving Sidon they were not able to sail direct to Asia because of the contrary winds, but sailed along the east coast of Cyprus, going north until they received the protection of the highlands of Asia Minor. Then they sailed west along the coast, for the sailors knew that at that point, going west along the south shore of Asia Minor, the sea current runs westward, which would aid them in their westward course although the winds were contrary. Upon arriving at Myra, a city of Lycia, they found an Alexandrian vessel laden with wheat, soon to depart for Rome. This must have been a vessel of considerable size and tonnage, as in addition to her cargo and crew she carried a company of 276 passengers. Leaving Myra they sailed westward, making very little progress, the wind being constantly against them, and it required many days to sail from Myra to the island of Cnidus, a distance

of about one hundred and twenty-five or thirty miles. When they arrived just about opposite Cnidus, which lies at the southwest angle of Asia Minor, the ship receiving the full force of the wind coming from the north, could no longer hold her westerly course, and it sailed almost due south to Cape Salmone, the eastern extremity of Crete. They found it impossible to sail upon the open sea and so took advantage of the protection of the island and sailed close to the shore. This would give them an opportunity of sailing about one hundred miles before going out upon the open sea. Going westward they arrived at the harbor of Fairhavens. Not far distant was a town called Lasea. Not expecting nearly so much difficulty in the journey, it therefore required much longer time to reach this point; and winter approaching they realized the fact that it was going to be extremely difficult to make the remainder of the trip during that time of the year. And it was a question if they should not spend the winter there. "The time of the fast was passed," which refers to the Day of Atonement of the Jewish church. This was observed on the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month, corresponding to the latter part of our September or beginning of October. Paul was now beginning to give advice, although he was a prisoner, to the people in charge of the ship. The centurion, however, took the advice of the master and owner of the ship, who felt that it would not be advisable to spend the winter at that place, and decided to move forward along the coast and attempt to reach Phenice, a western harbor of Crete, a place more suitable to spend the winter.

QUESTIONS.

What was determined?

To go by sea and not over land and the time fixed for sailing.

Who accompanied Paul?

Where did they land the following day?

What liberty did Paul enjoy?

From what direction was the wind?

Locate places mentioned.

What was the fast and what was its connection with sailing?

It is generally understood that this refers to the fast of the great Day of Atonement which was celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh month. To sail after this time was considered dangerous by the ancient Jews.

Where did they anchor?

Fairhavens, on the southern coast of the island of Crete, about midway between the east and west.

Describe the island of Crete.

It lies at the entrance of the Ægean Sea, and is about 140 miles long and 130 miles wide.

2. SHIP LEAVES FAIR HAVENS FOR PHENICE.

Acts 27: 13-20.

(13) And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close in shore. (14) But after no long time there beat down from it a tempestuous wind, which is called Euraquilo: (15) and when the ship was caught, and could not face the wind, we gave way to it, and were driven. (16) And running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat: (17) and when they had hoisted it up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and so were driven. (18) And as we labored exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to throw the freight overboard; (19) and the third day they cast out with their own hands the tackling of the ship. (20) And when neither sun nor stars shone upon us for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was now taken away.

Warnings concerning danger are not always heeded. The messenger of God gave directions, and when not obeyed calamity followed. Here these people were warned of the danger before them, but because they had made up their mind they would have smooth sailing, and more commodious winter quarters, they risked the dangerous journey that was before them. They had waited at the harbor for just the right kind of wind so that they might leave, and

when that time came they sailed along the south shore of the island of Crete; but so deceptive was that southerly breeze that the sailors did not think it necessary to take in the ship's boat which was allowed to tow behind. When they had come within a few hours of the harbor a severe storm came on, rushing down suddenly from the mountain tops of Crete; and as it was impossible to keep the vessel to face it, the ship was driven by the gale to the small island Clauda, which afforded her some protection. The hurricane which struck them was known as Euroclydon, the strong north wind that drove them to the south. They had to give way to the wind and were driven. The ship was not now under the control of the sailors but under the control of the wind. This island was about 23 miles to the southwest of Crete. Here they experienced great difficulty in taking on board the vessel the small boat to save it from being dashed to pieces. The next thing they did before going upon the open sea was to strengthen the vessel by putting strong flat cables around the hull of the ship a number of times to support it, in the times of great storms, to prevent the vessel's timbers from springing. The third thing they did was to lower the rigging, all except sails sufficient and so set as to enable her to drift as close to the wind as possible in a northwesterly direction, in order to miss the quicksands and prevent the vessel from being wrecked.

From this time on the vessel was allowed to drift by the storm. The following day the passengers tossed overboard part of the freight in order to lighten the ship. Then on the third day they threw overboard the tackling of the ship, which was done by the assistance of the passengers. It consisted of different kinds of material to be used by the sailors for the purpose of making repairs. The sailors at that time were directed as to their course by the heavenly bodies, and when neither the sun nor the stars appeared for many days, and the storm continued in its fury, all hope of their being saved was taken away.

QUESTIONS.

Why leave and where was the place for which they were sailing?

Paul advised them to remain, but the centurion at this time had more confidence in the master of the ship and therefore decided to go to Phenice, where they might winter. This was forty miles west of Fairhavens, and would have taken them but one day had it not been for the storm.

What was the direction of the tempestuous wind?

It was like a tornado, from the east and northeast. The sailors were powerless and could not control the ship.

Where is Claudia and how far south of Crete?

Name the three things that the sailors did while at Claudia.

How did they lighten the ship?

What did they do the third day after leaving Fairhavens?

What was the effect of not seeing the sun and the stars?

They could not tell the direction in which they were sailing. They were for fourteen days at the mercy of the storm and were drifting they knew not where.

3. PAUL GIVES COMFORT AND ADVICE.

Acts 27: 21-26.

(21) And when they had been long without food, then Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. (22) And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. (23) For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, (24) saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee. (25) Wherefore, sir, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. (26) But we must be cast upon a certain island.

The man who has faith in God never loses hope. In this hour of deepest darkness God again sent forth His angel during the night to comfort His servant. He was to reach Rome, he was the salt that would save this entire company. He stood forth before these people not to give advice but first rebuke. "Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me." They may have wondered what this priest of

religion knew about sailing, but he was directing this sailing under the supervision of Somebody else than himself. Paul here did more than rebuke—he inspired and cheered. He promised safety to them all, and in the presence of the company he acknowledged the God who appeared unto him and whom he worshiped. The idols worshiped by those on board this vessel had all failed them, and Paul’s God was about to bring deliverance to the company. He told this company that he himself was to stand before Cæsar and that his God had promised to give safety to all that sailed with him. “And I know that God is true and I accept His word, and you ought to be of good cheer, although we are to be cast upon a certain island.”

QUESTIONS.

Meaning of “after long abstinence”?

When they had been long without food and with death staring them in the face, no one could eat.

What did Paul say to the people? 21.

Who was with Paul at this critical moment and why?

What three things were promised Paul?

The salvation of his soul, preservation of his body, and safety of his fellow voyagers.

What was to occur? 26.

4. THE SHIP’S COMPANY IN GREAT DANGER.

Acts 27: 27-38.

(27) But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven to and fro in the sea of Adria, about midnight the sailors surmised that they were drawing near to some country: (28) and they sounded, and found twenty fathoms; and after a little space, they sounded again, and found fifteen fathoms. (29) And fearing lest haply we should be cast ashore on rocky ground, they let go four anchors from the stern, and wished (or, prayed) for the day. (30) And as the sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea, under color as though they would lay out anchors from the foreship, (31) Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye

cannot be saved. (32) Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. (33) And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take some food, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing. (34) Wherefore I beseech you to take some food: for this is for your safety: for there shall not a hair perish from the head of any of you. (35) And when he had said this, and had taken bread, he gave thanks to God in the presence of all; and he brake it, and began to eat. (36) Then were they all of good cheer, and themselves also took food. (37) And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. (38) And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea.

It was now fourteen days since they left Fairhavens. Those were days and nights of great anxiety. The ship was nearing the island called Malta, where they were to land, which increased their anxiety that likely the ship would be broken in pieces. About midnight, when the sailors sounded they found twenty fathoms, and just a little later they sounded again and found it fifteen fathoms, realizing that they were drifting nearer to land. Being alarmed lest the ship might be dashed to pieces, they cast four anchors out of the stern of the ship and were anxiously waiting for day-break. The shipmen saw no chance to escape. Having let down a little boat they were about to enter it and try to get away from the ship that was about to go to pieces, when Paul said to the centurion, "Except these abide in the ship, the ship's company can never be saved." The centurion ordered the soldiers immediately to cut the boat's rope, and the little ship was allowed to drift to the shore. As the morning was approaching Paul encouraged all the passengers on the boat to take some food that they might receive some strength. "Cheer up, we are all going to be saved!" After delivering this cheerful message to the people, the man who started as a prisoner, whose advice was not heeded at Fairhavens, was now the ruling spirit on the boat, and in the presence of them all praised his God and gave thanks for the meal of which they were to partake.

The people having caught the cheerful spirit of the Apostle and having partaken of this meal were willing to make any sacrifice in order that they might not perish. The boat was heavily laden and therefore there was great danger that she would soon strike bottom; and having received some hope of being saved, they at once cast overboard the sacks of grain. There are many Christian men and women, who have made shipwreck and are making shipwreck on their Christian voyage because of unwillingness to sacrifice earthly hindrances. Men and women must be willing to cast aside many things that are dear to them on the Christian journey, in order to increase their hope and make sure of the desired haven.

QUESTIONS.

How long were they driven up and down in Adria?

Adria was the name given to the wide sweep of the Mediterranean lying between Greece, Italy, and Africa. This name covered a much larger territory than it does now. They had drifted about 480 miles toward Malta. The time had been fourteen days since they left Fairhavens.

Why think they were near the land?

Why wish to abandon the ship?

Why cut off the ropes?

How many were on the boat?

Why did they wish to lighten the boat?

5. THE SHIP IS LOST, BUT THE MEN ARE SAVED.

Acts 27: 39-44.

39. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they perceived a certain bay with a beach, and they took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it (some ancient authorities read "bring the ship safe to shore"). (40) And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. (41) But lighting upon a place where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the foreship struck and remained unmoveable, but the stern began to break up by the violence of the waves. (42) And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners,

lest any of them should swim out, and escape. (43) But the centurion, desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose; and commanded that they who could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land; (44) and the rest, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. And so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to the land.

After the people had received strength and the wheat was thrown into the sea so the ship would not sink down so deep into the water and strike bottom so soon, the sailors cut the cables which held the anchors, letting them drop into the sea. It was now daylight. They discovered land, but were not able to identify it. The rudders or paddles which had been lifted during the time the boat was anchored, so that they would not be broken by the waves, were now loosened because they needed them in steering, and at the same time they hoisted the mainsail to give the vessel a forward movement through the water. Here we see the reason why Paul gave instructions that the sailors be kept on board so the passengers might be saved, because they were skilled in steering the vessel clear of the rocks and land the vessel at a point nearest the island. The two seas met where two heavy waves coming together struck the boat when she was fast in the sand, and broke her to pieces. The soldiers saw that their lives would be in danger if the prisoners were to escape and they suggested to the centurion that the prisoners be put to death. But Paul was under higher orders. He was to go to Rome. He had an influence on that ship. God had promised that all these should be saved, and now the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept the soldiers from their purpose, and commanded that the ones that could swim should cast themselves into the sea and get to land first, and the others might have assistance from the boards and broken pieces of the ship to reach the shore in safety. The Apostle had promised these people that they would all get to land safely and now the promise was fulfilled as they were all together on the island of Malta.



Paul Shipwrecked.

QUESTIONS.

Why did they not know the land?

Even if some were familiar with the island of Malta, yet coming so suddenly upon it, they would at first fail to recognize it.

Why wish to strike the beach?

They perceived a certain bay with a beach, such a sandy beach as would suit them to run the ship ashore.

Why raise a sail?

Why was it more dangerous where two seas met?

"The land from the ship appeared continuous, while part of it was an island separated from the land by a narrow channel with a strong current. The current meeting the opposing water formed a sand-bank on which the forepart of the ship stuck, while the hind part was in deep water and exposed to the force of the current."

Why so anxious to save Paul?

The centurion realized that it was to Paul that the safety of the whole party was due.

Give the fulfillment of Paul's three predictions.

(1) They were wrecked upon the island; (2) the ship was lost; (3) their lives were saved.

6. PAUL ON THE ISLAND OF MALTA.—Acts 28: 1-9.

(1) Hospitality of the People.—28: 1-2.

(1) And when we were escaped, then we knew that the island was called Melita (some ancient authorities read "Melitene"). (2) And the barbarians showed us no common kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us all, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

Everything was lost on this journey to Malta but the crew and the 276 passengers. After such an experience they would appreciate kind treatment from the people who inhabited the island. Luke called them barbarous people, a term simply used for all classes of people who did not speak the Greek language. These people were hospitable and showed them no little kindness. They kindled a fire and made this great company comfortable because of the cold and rainy season just at that time. These men had

already been drenched from swimming ashore, and the continuous rain prevented them from getting dry. The large fire was made by the burning of sticks and brush, which cost the natives some effort, for everything was soaked by the continuous rains.

QUESTIONS.

Where is Melita?

The name frequently given to this island is Malta, a shortened form. It is sixty miles south of Sicily, about 200 from the African coast. It is seventeen miles long, nine miles wide, and about sixty miles in circumference.

(2) Paul's Credentials.—Acts 28: 3-9.

(3) But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out by reason of the heat (or, from the heat), and fastened on his hand. (4) And when the barbarians saw the venomous creature hanging from his hand, they said one to another, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped from the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live. (5) Howbeit he shook off the creature into the fire, and took no harm. (6) But they expected that he would have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but when they were long in expectation and beheld nothing amiss come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

(7) Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius; who received us, and entertained us three days courteously. (8) And it was so, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery; unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him. (9) And when this was done, the rest also that had diseases in the island came, and were cured:

Paul, who had been the moving spirit on the ship, the greatest man in that company, and no doubt the greatest man on that island, was not above soiling his hands in the gathering of sticks and willing to do the humblest service. When Paul had gathered these sticks, and was placing the bundle on the fire a viper, which had hid away among the brush and was now awakened by the heat, crawled forth, fastening itself on Paul's hand. The inhabitants of the island saw the creature hanging on his hand, and know-

ing it to be poisonous, concluded that he must be some great criminal or murderer. Although he had escaped being punished on the sea for his crime, here vengeance was meted out and he must die. Paul was a prominent prisoner and so they had a right to conclude that he must have committed some great crime. The Apostle shook off the beast into the fire without showing any alarm. He was familiar with the teachings of Christ to his disciples, concerning serpents (Mark 16: 18; Luke 10: 19). He also remembered the promise that he should preach the Gospel in Rome; then why should he be alarmed? This could not be the place of his death. The bystanders were sure that death would speedily come, but when the evil consequences did not follow the usual results of the bite, they changed their opinion, and believed him to be a god. The miracle was wrought here before these people by the direct power of God, which had a wholesome influence upon these islanders.

In the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the governor of the island, whose name was Publius. This man invited Paul and his companions to his home. It may be possible that the text includes the entire company of the 276 people, who were kindly cared for, for three days, at the expense of the governor. While they were in this home, enjoying this hospitality, the father of the governor lay sick with the fever, which was considered very dangerous, same as it is now. The governor, having heard of the miraculous escape from the bite of the serpent, no doubt regarded Paul as a very remarkable man. Paul receiving this favor from the governor, desired to bestow a favor upon him, and cured his father. After seeing how God protected Paul and gave him power to heal the governor's father, many who were diseased and living on the island, came to him and were cured.

Christ wants those who are leaders in the Church, such as missionaries, pastors and teachers as channels of blessings to all.

QUESTIONS.

What had happened to Paul, and what did the islanders conclude?

That the bite of that poisonous serpent meant death and came upon those who had committed a crime and deserved to die. Instead of calling him a murderer or a god, they should have said, "Paul is a man of God."

Who was Publius?

Who was dangerously ill?

No one ever loses by hospitality, especially if it is extended to a servant of God. Here God opened a way for Paul to repay the kindness of Publius and to exalt Christ before these heathens. Paul laid his hand on the father of Publius, after prayer—the hand that just now overcame the serpent—and he was healed.

What other miracles did Paul perform?

7. THE JOURNEY FROM MELITA TO ROME.

Acts 28: 10-16.

(10) Who also honored us with many honors; and when we sailed, they put on board such things as we needed.

(11) And after three months we set sail in a ship of Alexandria which had wintered in the island, whose sign was The Twin Brothers (Gr. Dioscuri). (12) And touching at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. (13) And from thence we made a circuit, and arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli; (14) where we found brethren, and were entreated to tarry with them seven days: and so we came to Rome. (15) And from thence the brethren, when they heard of us, came to meet us as far as The Market of Appius and The Three Taverns; whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

(16) And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him.

We have been on the journey for some time with our prisoner after the long and dangerous voyage on the sea, at last landing at Malta. It was necessary because of the time of the year to remain three months, until the vessels then lying in the harbor could venture out upon the seas. Some remarkable things had taken place on the island, as

well as on this journey from here to Rome. On the island it seemed strange that Paul should do the healing and not Luke, the physician. Paul was a preacher, a tent maker, and also able to heal the sick. We have no account of Luke healing anyone. Luke kept the record, magnified the preaching, and never made mention of his own talent. "It is religion that heals: the medicines are grown in God's garden. The doctor who comes to your home can do you good in proportion as he is able to lead you out of yourself, and that is done only by those who are able to go out of themselves." James tells us of the Christian's power to heal. The Bible is the best Book on healing; the Christian is the greatest healer in the world.

Another thing remarkable is that the poorest should be the one who should administer to the richest. A prisoner, who had not a thing in his hand to give, was able to give more to the rich man on the island than any one else. A man in chains, a prisoner, without owning a thing in this world, may be in possession of wealth that cannot be bought with mountains of silver and gold.

Then the work that was done on this island was not by preaching the Gospel but by the power of healing. There are many different ways that Jesus has for His servants to open His work in different localities. Christianity can assert itself anywhere and at any time. The Christian man's question should be, "What is your burden, what your sorrow, what is your disease, what is your sin?" The church interested only in educating men for the ministry has very narrow visions as to the whole duty of the church.

Men and women must be trained by the church, to heal, to sympathize, to sing, and to conduct business in a Christian way. After the Christians had so wonderfully shown their sympathy and helpfulness to these islanders they were rewarded for the same while with them, and upon their departure they bestowed upon them all things necessary for their journey. They honored this little band of disciples.

They did not charge a fee for everything they did, but they were given their support. It is true that every man that works is entitled to his wages. So the minister of the Gospel, if he does his work under the direction of the Great Master, is not only entitled to his support, but has been promised it. If he does not receive it, it is a sure indication that he ought not to be in it.

The vessel, by the name of Alexandria, whose sign was "The Twin Brothers," was ready to sail and they departed on their journey to Italy. It was now early spring. Their first stopping place was Syracuse, on the coast of Sicily, a distance of about one hundred miles from Malta. After tarrying three days they continued the journey. The wind became unfavorable and it took considerable time to reach Rhegium, because they were driven to and fro. Before leaving for the next point the wind was in their favor, and they reached Puteoli, a distance of nearly two hundred miles in a single day. At this point Julius, the centurion, left the ship with his prisoners, to make the rest of the journey by land. The last account we have of Paul being with any of his brethren was at Sidon, soon after he had left on his journey to Rome. Now after being on this journey for a number of months, and before reaching Rome, he met his brethren, and by the permission of Julius, over whom he had great influence, he remained here an entire week. This shows the influence the Gospel had in Italy before Paul's arrival. The Christians in Italy knew of Paul's coming, and came all the way from Rome to Appii Forum, forty-three miles, and The Three Taverns, thirty-three miles, to meet him. Did Paul, after two years of prison life at Cæsarea, the rough journey on the sea, and the three months' waiting for a vessel to go to Rome, appreciate the meeting of his brethren, to welcome him on the mission he had for the Lord at Rome? Was the Apostle Paul human? Would he appreciate a word of encouragement?

These brethren had the right spirit. They looked up-

on him as the prince of the Lord, and would have gone farther on the road if they had been certain not to miss him. Think of it, brethren! When he saw these Christians, up went his hands, in thanksgiving and adoration to God, and his heart of courage returned, and he entered the city of Rome as the man of God. People today need human sympathy, human associates, who can warm the heart, and give strength for the battle of life.

Upon arriving at Rome Julius turned over his prisoner to the captain of the guard. Julius no doubt told the captain about the character of his prisoner, directing that he should not be in chains, and the captain showed him kindness by permitting him to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. The soldier was always with him. He always had one man to preach to. The soldiers were changed from day to day, and no doubt there was no difficulty in getting some one to be Paul's associate, because Paul was a real advantage to the soldier that kept him. This was a great opportunity to do missionary work. These different soldiers who guarded him would be out in different parts of the city and tell the story that Paul had delivered to them.

QUESTIONS.

What had they received from the islanders?

What remarkable things happened on the island?

How long had they remained at Malta?

Where is Syracuse and how long did they remain there?

Where is Rhegium and why the circuitous route?

At the southwest extremity of Italy. "Fetched a compass." This means they took a circuitous route on account of the change of the wind, and also so as to touch at the point here named.

Where did they arrive the next day, and give the distance?

How long did they remain at this place and why?

Where did the brethren from Rome meet them?

The brethren at Rome heard of Paul and his companions being at Puteoli and started to meet them. He was met by two companies on his journey from here to Rome.

What effect had it on Paul to meet his brethren?
What were his privileges at Rome?

He was suffered to dwell by himself, in his own hired house, with only a single soldier to guard him. Because of this liberty granted him he was able to carry on his great missionary work at the capital of the world.

Section VII. Paul's Ministry in Rome.

Acts 28: 17-31.

1. PAUL'S FIRST INTERVIEW WITH THE JEWS.

Acts 28: 17-22.

(17) And it came to pass, that after three days he called together those that were the chief of the Jews: and when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans: (18) who, when they had examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. (19) But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught whereof to accuse my nation. (20) For this cause therefore did I entreat you to see and to speak with me: for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. (21) And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judæa concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee. (22) But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.

Paul was now in Rome. His desire was granted, his prayer answered, the Lord's promise fulfilled. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." After being in Rome but three days he called together the chief of the Jews. There were seven Jewish synagogues in Rome, and Paul called together the elders in each one of them. Everywhere the Gospel went the leaders of the nation were not forgotten. Paul again appealed to his own countrymen. He claimed to be still a Jew. There was nothing little about Paul. No matter what others might do against him he was too big to allow the same spirit to take hold of his life.

“Christianity is Judaism perfected and glorified.” He explained to these people why he was in Rome as a prisoner. He had, in no way, done anything that was against the people or the things taught by the Law and Prophets. “When I was examined the judges would have given me my liberty, but the Jews spake against it and it became necessary to make my appeal unto Cæsar. Not in any sense that I had anything against my nation. And now for this very purpose I have called you; I am here in bonds, not because I have violated the teaching of the Law and the Prophets, but because my teaching has been that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, and the hope of Israel which is cleared up by the Law. And because I set forth this hope I am here in bonds.” The Jews then said unto him that they had no information from Judea, either by letter or from brethren who had come from Jerusalem to Rome. Therefore they had heard nothing evil against him. However, they had heard a great deal concerning the sect that he represented. (The word “sect” here is the same as “heresy.” Its meaning is really “party.” It means the breaking up of the Jews into another party.) These Roman Jews certainly knew something about Christianity, for there was a Christian church at Rome and Jewish Christians among the disciples. It is a good thing to belong to the right party. “The sect must be everywhere spoken against if ever it is to rule the world. What great truth is there that has not had to fight its way as Paul had to fight his? This sect was everywhere spoken against, and they are still speaking against it. This sect has Jesus Christ for its Leader, its Captain, and you want to be sure to belong to Him, and not to some organization that represents Him afar off.”

QUESTIONS.

When did Paul call the chief of the Jews together?
What statement did he make to them?
Why had he appealed to Cæsar?

Why was he made a prisoner?

Because he preached Jesus as the Hope of Israel.

What statement did the Jews make in reply?

What desire did they express?

To what sect did they allude and who was the Leader of that sect?

2. PAUL PREACHING TO THE JEWS.

Acts 28: 23-27.

(23) And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded the matter, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening. (24) And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. (25) And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, (26) saying, (Isa. 6: 9, 10) Go thou unto this people, and say, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive:

(27) For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them.

Before closing their former interview they had arranged for a time when all could meet and Paul could deliver them a sermon on the sect that was spoken against. Quite a company met him at his lodging, and he preached them an expository sermon, basing his arguments upon the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament. This was a meeting that lasted all day. What a wonderful message must have come from his lips as he unfolded the prophetic testimony gathered through the entire Old Testament, concerning the Messiah, the Hope of the Jewish nation! The Apostle Paul had told them that because he had preached that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the hope of the Jewish nation,

therefore he was in bonds. His entire message was the truth set forth in the Scriptures, as presented to him by the Holy Spirit.

The results here are the same as before when he preached. Some believed and others rejected the Messiah as the Hope of the nation. Here the same opportunity was given to the Jews, but they turned away from him who was offering it. After speaking these warning words to the Jews that were before him, quoting this same truth uttered by the Holy Spirit, through Isaiah, he followed the same course he had in Corinth and Ephesus, leaving the Jews to their fate and proclaiming to the Gentiles the Gospel of Grace.

QUESTIONS.

Where did the Jews meet so he might speak to them?

Meaning of "expounded and testified"?

He reasoned out of the Scriptures and explained and set forth the truth as God made it known to him. He bore witness from his own experience of the revelations God made to him.

What scripture did he use to exalt Jesus?

The Law of Moses and the Prophets. These were common grounds. All believed them.

How long did he continue the discourse?

How was this sermon received by the Jews?

From what book did he quote?

He quoted from Isa. 6: 9. These Jews would not obey the truth. By so doing they hardened their own hearts and blinded their own eyes. It was less than ten years later that Jerusalem and the temple were wholly destroyed and the Jews became a scattered nation and therefore really no longer a nation.

3. PAUL TURNING TO THE GENTILES.

Acts 28: 28-31.

(28) Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear. (Some ancient authorities insert ver. 29, And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, having much disputing among themselves.)

(30) And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling,

and received all that went in unto him, (31) preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.

It is indeed sad when people close their eyes to the light, harden their hearts, and thus prepare themselves for God's judgment to fall upon them. The Apostle, with this sad feeling in his heart, realizing the condition of his own countrymen, the people whom he loved, uttered this farewell: "Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles." The same passage that Paul used had been used by Jesus to the unbelieving Jews at Galilee (Matt. 13: 14). The Apostle John, in speaking of the unbelief of these same people, who had heard Jesus in Jerusalem, quoted the same words (John 12: 40). This same Gospel, started on its mission to the Gentiles, is still preached. Are the Gentiles, as a people, receiving this Gospel, or will they by their neglect and indifference bring judgment upon themselves, and will God take the truth away from them as He did from the Jews?

The Jews must have had a great meeting after they left Paul, but it was a meeting that was of little value and was of no help to themselves or to anyone else.

The penman is about to bring his book to a close, by simply informing us that for two whole years Paul dwelt in his own hired house, and had many visitors during that period. Great liberty was granted to him in the preaching of the Gospel, magnifying the Lord Jesus Christ, and at no time during these two years did anyone interfere or hinder him in the missionary work for which he had been sent to Rome.

We began in the study of our book, at Jerusalem. We are now in Rome. It is a continuous, progressive history of the church of Jesus Christ. It contains the Acts of Christ, the Spirit of God, the opposition of Satan. The book closes, but the history of the church moves forward.

In the studying of Paul's writings we learn much of

what has been accomplished during these two years and what may have taken place providing Paul was released from his first imprisonment. The following chapter will give information concerning a further history of Paul as gleaned from the study of his letters.

QUESTIONS.

Give Paul's reasons for going to the Gentiles.

The Jews rejected the Gospel, so he now turns to the Gentiles who are ready to receive it.

What did the Jews do?

Where did Paul dwell while in Rome?

How long did he remain there?

What did he do during this period?

During two years, mentioned by Luke (Acts 28:30), Paul had liberty to do constant missionary work. It would appear to us to be quite a hindrance, but he made full use of his opportunities. He was during the two years chained to some soldier, and was expected to be at his own hired house. Many came to him during the two years to hear him teach the Bible. It was during this time that he wrote letters to different churches. It is not advisable to go into detail concerning the letters he wrote, as that will be treated in another book which is to appear for further study.

1. Onesimus, a runaway slave from Colosse, visited Paul at Rome and heard him preach. He was converted, and Paul felt he needed his services and sympathy, but would not influence him to be untrue to his master. Only by consent of his owner would Paul keep him. Paul wrote a letter to Philemon, and sent the letter with Onesimus when he returned to his owner. The letter he carried was to secure his proper treatment on return to his master. It is a letter full of interest and worthy of careful study. It contains but twenty-five verses.

2. In the same town, Colosse, from which Onesimus had come, was a growing Christian church. Paul was visited by Epaphras while in Rome. For some reason he also

was made a prisoner, and reported to Paul some very serious hindrances to the growth and prosperity of said church. Paul, in order to correct these difficulties, wrote this letter to the Colossian church and sent it by Tychicus.

3. The bearer of the epistle to the Colossian church was a member of the church at Ephesus and, having an opportunity to send by the same hand, Paul wrote the Ephesian letter. The two letters sent by Tychicus are very similar in thought and style, showing that they were written about the same time.

The three letters, from careful study, show that they were written soon after Paul's imprisonment, as he seems very hopeful of soon being released. In the Philippian letter that same hope is not expressed; it must have been written at a time when almost all hope of being released had failed. The church at Philippi had sent him contributions by the hands of Epaphroditus. When he had delivered the contribution to Paul, he was taken seriously ill, which was reported to the Philippian church. This church was deeply concerned about his recovery. Just as soon as he had recovered sufficiently, Paul wrote a letter to said church, which was sent by the hands of Epaphroditus.

There are many good Bible students who hold that Paul was released from his first imprisonment, after which he did considerable missionary work, visiting a number of churches and writing some valuable letters to different churches. This seems to us to be most in keeping with the work done and history furnished us by Paul in his letters. Believing this to be most in harmony with the spirit of his work, we proceed to give a very brief statement of each letter.

After Paul's release, in company with Timothy, he visited the Ephesian church. Timothy had been with Paul at Rome. When the time came to leave, Paul thought it prudent to have Timothy remain (1 Tim. 1:3), to do specific work in that church. It was while with the church at

Philippi that he found it impossible to visit just then the Ephesian church, so he wrote the first letter to Timothy, about A. D. 63.

Paul had been, for some time, in Macedonia and went from there to Crete, where he did some missionary work. After returning to Asia Minor, he wrote the Titus letter and sent it to him, giving instruction for the Cretan churches. This was about A. D. 64.

The last letter written by Paul was after his second imprisonment and just before his execution by Nero. It is a letter full of encouragement to Timothy, and will always be read as Paul's last words. This may have been written about A. D. 67.

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